

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE
STUDENTS STUDYING AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the Masters of Education Degree in
the Discipline of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy, School of Education,
University of KwaZulu-Natal**

MARCH 2020

Supervisor: Prof. TT Bhengu

DECLARATION

I, Zanele Yvone Khanyile, declare that this research report, **“Exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying at a South African university”** abides by the following rules:

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Researcher:

Zanele Yvone Khanyile

27 February 2020

Date

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This dissertation has been submitted with/~~without~~ my approval

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Date: 27 February 2020

16 July 2019

Ms Zanete Yvone Khanyile (S55058748)
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Dear Ms Khanyile,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0172/019M

Project title: Exploring the lived experiences of International Postgraduate students from the African continent studying at a South African University

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 01 March 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



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DEDICATION

Firstly, I dedicate this study to God Almighty my creator, my strong pillar, my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He strengthened me throughout this study, and gave me power to finish what I started. I do not take lightly waking up every morning and going to sleep every night it is only your grace and love for me and I am eternally grateful. Secondly, I dedicate this study to my parents Moses Khanyile, Ngwane, Sogodi, Mbiza, Langa and MaDlamini – Sibalukhulu. Their support and encouragement sustained me throughout the course of this study.

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ABSTRACT

South Africa has emerged as an educational destination of choice in the region with its inbound rate far exceeding its outbound rate. South African universities are chosen based on the promise of a constitutionally and politically welcoming university environment. This study was carried in one university in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The study is underpinned by interpretivist paradigm with phenomenology used as a methodology. Semi-structured interviews were used to generate qualitative data. Systems School Leadership theory was adopted as a lens to frame the analysis. The findings revealed that international postgraduate students lived experiences were characterised by issues such as feelings of being foreigners in a foreign land. International students also faced language problems, and that the university made no tangible attempts to support them in their plights. Marginalisation in the area of sporting activities, as well as a host of other discriminatory practices, dominated their descriptions of their experiences. From the international students' perspectives, leadership in the university was not doing enough to ensure that their lives were less unbearable and more comfortable considering the fact that they lived in a foreign country. Based on a number of findings, a number of recommendations are made about what the university leadership should do to improve their university lives.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	-	Association of African Universities
AHERS	-	African Higher Education and Research Space
AU	-	African Union
CHE	-	Council on Higher Education
CSIR	-	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DHET	-	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	-	Department of Education
EC	-	European Commission
HEIs	-	Higher Education Institutions
HEMIS	-	Higher Education Management Information System
HESA	-	Higher Education South Africa
IEASA	-	International Education Association of South Africa
IOM	-	International Organisation for Migration
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	-	National Research Foundation
NSFAS	-	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAU	-	Pan African University
SA	-	South Africa
SADC	-	Southern African Development Community
SADQCF	-	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
SAQA	-	South African Qualifications Authority
SARUA	-	Southern African Regional Universities Association
SETA.	-	Sector Education and Training
ST	-	Systems Thinking
UNESCO	-	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	-	United States of America
WTO	-	World Trade Organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE NUMBER
Title	
Declaration	ii
Supervisor statement	iii
Ethical clearance certificate	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Abstract	vii
Abbreviations	viii
Table of contents	ix
List of tables	xii
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the study	1
1.3 Statement of the problem	2
1.4 Rationale for the study	3
1.5 Significance of the study	4
1.6 Research questions	5
1.7 Definition of key concepts	5
1.8 Delimitations and demarcation of the study	7
1.9 Limitations of the study	8
1.10 Organisation of the study	8
1.11 Chapter summary	9
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2.1 Understanding of internationalisation in higher education	10
2.2.3 Internationalisation history	17
2.2.4 Internationalisation policies	18

2.2.5 Lived experiences of international postgraduate students	20
2.2.6 Challenging experiences of international postgraduate students	22
2.2.7 Strategies used by universities to address international students' challenges	23
2.2.8 Academic mobility in Africa	24
2.2.9 African students' studies in South Africa	32
2.2.10 Integration into a South African university: Students' perspectives	33
2.3 Theoretical framework	34
2.3.1 Systems Schools Leadership theory	35
2.4 Chapter summary	28
CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Introduction	39
3.2 Research paradigm	39
3.3 Methodology	41
3.4 Research design	43
3.5 Sampling	44
3.6 Gaining access to the institution	45
3.7 Data generation methods	47
3.8 Data analysis methods	48
3.9 Trustworthiness	50
3.10 Ethical considerations	52
3.11 Limitations	53
3.12 Chapter summary	53
CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION	
4.1 Introduction	54
4.2 Data presentation	55
4.2.1 Financial needs an eminent threat to survival	56
4.2.2 Being a foreigner in a foreign land	58
4.2.3 Misunderstandings about language issues	61
4.2.4 Traumatic experiences surrounding accommodation issues	63
4.2.5 Complexities and paradoxes surrounding participation in sports	65

4.2.6 Practice what you preach! Experiences of international students' life at the university	66
4.2.7 Trials and tribulations of gaining access and staying in the country	69
4.2.8 Supportive academic environment; supervisor interactions	71
4.2.9 What university leadership ought to do?	72
4.3 Chapter summary	74
CHAPTER FIVE	
STUDY SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Introduction	75
5.2 Study summary	75
5.3 Key research questions	76
5.4 Presentation of findings	76
5.4.1 What are the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying in South Africa?	76
5.4.2 What challenges do international postgraduate students face while studying in South Africa	77
5.4.3 What can be learnt about how university leadership responds to international postgraduate students?	79
5.5 Recommendations	82
5.6 Implications of this study	83
5.7 Suggestions for further research	83
5.8 Chapter summary	83
REFERENCES	84
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Letter to request permission from gate keepers	98
Appendix B- Permission letter and informed consent to participants	94
Appendix C: Interview schedule	97
Appendix D: Letter of approval from Gatekeeper	99
Appendix E: Turn it in certificate	100

LISTS OF TABLES

TABLE 1	Demographic characteristics of the participants
TABLE 2	Participant's background

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the lived experiences of international postgraduate students coming from other parts of the African continent to study in South Africa (SA). These experiences are explored in relation to the role that university leadership plays towards the wellbeing of these students. South Africa's democracy is one of the new ones in the African continent and is only just reaching maturity at 26 years and its universities are experiencing a steady increase of international postgraduate students' enrolments (Council for Higher Education [CHE], 2006). This is because South Africa has emerged as an educational destination of choice within the African continent with its inbound rate far exceeding its outbound rate (Lee & Schoole, 2015). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ranks South Africa as number 14 in the category of preferred destination for international students in the world (Moss, Dahlberg, Grieshaber, Mantovani, May, Pence, & Vandenbroeck, 2016). The popularity of SA as a leading student destination of choice is evidenced by the increase from 10% in 2002 to 14% in 2012 (CHE, 2016). Most international students immigrating for educational reasons to South Africa originate from sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2016).

This chapter introduces the study, and specifically gives an overview of the whole research study. It begins by providing a background to the problem, and moves on to formally state the problem. This is followed by the discussion of the rationale for the study to be undertaken, its significance, objectives and research questions, the definition of key terms, the limitations and assumptions and ends with the organisation of the study, as well as the summary.

1.2 Background to the study

South Africa has become an obvious and easy choice for many African postgraduate students because of its geographical proximity to several sub-Saharan countries. Secondly, English is one of the main languages spoken in the country and also in the region of Southern Africa. Thirdly, SA has a lower fee structure than other developed countries and also has a lower cost

of living when compared to other popular study destinations such as China, France, Australia and so forth (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009; Dwyer, Peters & Peters, 2010). International students fees are more than the fees charged local students, of the international students those that are from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) still pay less than other international students (UNESCO, 2016). The lower fee structure for the SADC international students is as a result of the regional agreements. Postgraduate international students studying in SA increased from 50 000 to 70 000 over the decade starting in 2003 and the majority of these international students originated from sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2016). This is beneficial for South African universities in that it brings greater diversity to campuses, crucial global perspectives to research, significant economic benefits, and provides an internationally and culturally diverse campus environment (Cudmore, 2005).

The popularity of SA as postgraduate students' destination has concomitant opportunities and challenges for both the students and the country. For instance, demands for space in the universities has put pressure in terms of increased student enrolment. Postgraduate international students arriving in SA are reported to have experienced a variety of challenges such as social isolation, hostility and feelings of hopelessness due to their transition into the new environment and adapting into the new culture (Lee & Sehoole, 2015). Also, SA has experienced a series of xenophobic attacks (Lee & Sehoole, 2015) and the #FeesMustFall student protest (Da Silva, 2016). These are some of the events that have disrupted academic activity and progress, threatened sense of security and may have created an impression of an unwelcoming environment for international students in SA. It is a universal expectation that international students have to be welcomed and integrated into the university community of the host country (The Times Higher Education, 2019; Dwyer, Peters & Peters, 2010). The question that follows then, is that given the increasing enrolment of international postgraduate students in SA, are international postgraduate students well integrated into the university community of students?

Being in an unfamiliar environment poses challenges for international postgraduate students (Pilane, 2016) and therefore, they have additional and differing support needs than local students do and it would be at the best interest of the university to recognise and implement appropriate strategies and policies (Singh & Keshari, 2014). University policies have been seen to contain flavours of ethnocentrism and this threatens international students' ability to adapt socially, culturally, and economically in host countries (Marginson, Nyland. Sawir & Forbes-

Mewet, 2010; Scott, Safdar, Desai & El Masri, 2015). This study sought to explore the lived experiences of seven international postgraduate students studying at one of the South African universities. Therefore, this study is valuable, not only because of its potential to contribute towards the understandings of the experiences of international students, but also because of its potential contribution in advancing the sensitivity amongst South African universities to the cause of these students. Some South African universities have started investing enormously in international education with the aim of enhancing their international status and visibility (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). This investment by universities is in response to the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology's (DHET, 2010) national agenda policy framework on internationalisation which encourages the cultivation of global citizenship to effect social change and transformation in higher education. The Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology's (DHET, 2017), National Policy Framework, amongst its primary focus areas, is for appropriate measures, as far as possible, to be implemented by the government and other stakeholders to attract and retain international talent in the South African job market, such as the foreign nationals graduating with PhDs at South African higher education institutions and graduates in scarce skills.

1.2 Statement of the problem

SA has assumed a major role in the region regarding the phenomenon of educational migration, but still the South African context has remained understudied (Naik, Wawrzynski, & Brown 2017), and thus, less is understood about this phenomenon. Moreover, still lacking are studies on the lived experiences of the international postgraduate students focusing specifically on being integrated into the university community of students. Also, little is known about the perceived effects of policies that South African universities have put in place for better integration of international students (Lee & Schoole, 2015). Similarly, Hirilal (2015) agrees also that existing research has not explored the lived experiences of international students who pursue postgraduate studies in SA in terms of support that is required to achieve personal and professional integration. The majority of literature on lived experiences of postgraduate international students and on issues surrounding their integration is based in the United Kingdom (UK), Australian and the United States (US) context (Naik, Wawrzynski & Brown, 2017). Mattes, Crush and Richmond (2000) in their article "The Brain Gain: Skilled migrants and immigration policy in post-apartheid South Africa", argue that SA is hosting many

countries within its higher education institutions, yet, there does not seem to be clear policies aimed at facilitating the integration of international students into South African universities. It is assumed that now 26 years into a democratic dispensation, South African universities have clear policies aimed at the integration of international students. South African universities have policy plans that offer a framework to examine the role of the institution and its place in internationalisation.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying at a South African university. As a Master's student, I was part of the postgraduate learning community made up of a diverse group of postgraduate students. From my own experiences within this small community, I realised that we were diverse but also that we were not collaborating. Also, as a lecturer in a South African university and given my experience and dialogue with other colleagues, it was noted that international students who undertake postgraduate studies in a South African university encounter more challenges and complexities than the average South African postgraduate student. This is particularly the case if the culture of the international students' home country is strikingly different from South African culture. Inevitably, becoming an international student is a transition that will challenge any individual and his or her sense of wellbeing (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson, 2008).

Furthermore, my background as an educational leadership and management student, I have developed a keen interest in possible policies and/or strategies that the university leadership is doing to address the diversity of student communities. However, my interest at this stage comes from the students' perspectives as recipients and/or beneficiaries of services provided by the universities. Certainly, the assumption I work with is that the improved quality of services rendered by universities will enhance the lived experiences of students generally, including those of international postgraduate students. My interest in the subject further expanded to how university management provided support to international postgraduate students and how the lives of these students were impacted as a result of the support offered. Of equal concern was how international students perceived management to be assisting them to meet their needs and alleviate their transitional challenges.

This study was conducted at a South African university which is a natural setting for postgraduate international students which was the best setting for understanding why they did what they did which then becomes their lived experiences. Conducting the study in the environment in which it is based ensured integrity of the results obtained, also students responded positively to participation in the study as they were not removed from their current environment.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study has merit in the sense that, in addition to my interest, there is the concern expressed by Lee and Sehoole (2015) that, while Africa is the largest continent in the world, there is particularly limited empirical higher education research published on this continent. There is limited literature on the lived experiences of international postgraduate students within the universities in sub Saharan Africa. While there has been significant research on international students globally, there is a lack of research on international students in South Africa. In this research study, I found literature pertaining to the experiences of international students within the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia (Klomegah, 2006; Mori, 2000; Özturgut & Murphy, 2009). Studies conducted (Kotecha, 2006; McLellan, 2009; Moja, 2006; Ramphele et al, 1999; Rouhani, 2002) within South Africa and in the sub-Saharan Africa highlight learning problems, difficulties and challenges faced by international students. International students often arrive in the host country with certain expectations and hopes about their social life but quickly discover upon arrival the difference between their social expectations and the social reality of life (Bakhtiari & Shajar, 2006; Klomegah, 2006). It is therefore, important to highlight the issue of the lived experiences of international students within the South African context. This study is further valuable because of its potential to contribute towards understanding the experiences of international students to the fore and therefore create an awareness among the universities and the Department of Higher Education Science and Technology as to how to best attract international students and keep them happy. This study adopted a phenomenological stance to explore the lived experiences of African, international postgraduate students studying at a South African university. The use of phenomenology was to be able me to describe meanings of experiences in terms of what is experienced and how it was experienced.

1.6 Research questions

In exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying in South Africa the study sought to generate answers to the following research questions:

- What are the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying in a South African university?
- What challenges do international postgraduate students experience whilst studying at a South African University?
- What can be learned about how University leadership responds to international postgraduate students' needs?

1.7 Definition of key concepts

There are various terms that are critical in understanding this study. In this section, I briefly discuss them, and these are, educational migration, international postgraduate student and lived experiences.

1.7.1 Conceptualising educational migration

Educational migration refers to the outbound and inbound flow of students, moving to study outside of their country and international students immigrating to be hosted for study purposes (Hegedorn & Amp; Zhang 2012). The concept 'educational migration' is closely linked with academic mobility, and some scholars use these concepts interchangeably. According to UNESCO (2011), academic mobility is for a limited period designated for study, teaching or research in a country that is not the student's country of origin or residence. Academic mobility is usually followed by a return to home country, therefore, creating an elite of overseas educated locals. Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010) view academic mobility as another form of migration emanating from struggles of access to education and employment. Another interesting view is that it is actually a form of migration, hence, most countries have included academic mobility in their migration policies. The complexity of this phenomenon continues to present itself in career choices of academics and study options of students, the institutional arrangements to make mobility and internationalisation possible. The Department of Higher Education Science and Technology utilises the term student mobility in referring to the

movement of students between national territories for academic and related purposes and it can take the form of inbound mobility and outbound mobility (DHET, 2017). This conceptualisation is more appropriate for this study, and I am using the two concepts interchangeably.

1.7.2 Conceptualising international postgraduate student

International student is an individual who has moved from one country to another primarily for the purpose of study (Council of Higher Education, 2006, p. 69). Andrade (2018, p.134) defines international students as individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who are on temporary student visas. However, his definition is limiting, as it does not include asylum seekers, permanent residents and immigrants. The term international students are oftentimes used interchangeably with foreign students.

A postgraduate student is a student who has obtained a degree from a university and is pursuing studies for a more advanced qualification (Collins English Dictionary, 2003; Wilkes & Krebs, 2000). International postgraduate students are part of the international student group. However, the term postgraduate means that these students would have obtained a bachelor degree, honours or master's degree from a university in their home country and moved to a host country to further their studies for a more advanced qualification. Therefore, international or foreign postgraduate students are defined as individuals who are living and studying in a country that is not their home country. International student in the South African context means an individual registered as a student in a public or private higher education institution in a country other than their country of citizenship. (DHET, 2017).

For the purpose of this study, international postgraduate students are students from other African countries who had come to SA for the primary purpose of studying towards and obtaining a postgraduate degree (Anderson, Carmichael, Harper, & Huang, 2007; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). It is important to note that included in this study are those who had come to SA as asylum seekers, refugees, permanent residents, or any other immigration category that allows long-term legal presence in SA.

1.7.3 Conceptualising lived experiences

Van Manen (2015) affirms that exploring lived experiences is to study a person's world as that person lives it. It is about seeking to obtain a more complete understanding of their experiences and what it means to live in the world. Lived experiences are the representation of the experiences and choices of a given person and the knowledge from which these experiences are gained and choices made (Van Manen, 2015). Lived experiences are a representation and understanding of human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge (Findlay, 2010). Participants own their experiences and can offer researchers an understanding of their thoughts, commitments and feelings through telling their own stories, in their own words, and in as much detail as possible.

This study sought to understand international postgraduate students' lived experiences as they study at a South African university. Experience may be influenced by complex factors and includes language, race and class of the international student. Lived experiences according to Van Manen (2015), are about what it means to live in a certain world and choices made meanwhile. However, Findlay (2010) goes beyond choices and looks at understanding the thoughts, commitments and feelings. Therefore, there is parallelism and minor divergences in the way both these scholars contextualise lived experiences. For the purpose of this study, the lived experiences are looked at under the social domain, which is concerned with the norms and assumptions about people and their social interactions in the broader society, as well as, in the campus microcosm (Backhouse & Adam, 2019). The social domain proved useful in understanding the different aspects of student experience as well as the role of the university in student experience.

1.8 Delimitations and demarcation of the study

Demarcating the problem means establishing the parameters of the problem area within which the study is carried out (Horberg, 1999). This study was carried out at a South African university in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and focused on lived experiences of seven postgraduate international students studying at that university. Demarcating the problem helped me to make the study manageable as it gave me a secure basis for planning my study.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The following factors constituted limitations and, in some instances, potential limitations for this study. I start with a potential limitation before discussing the real limitation. The study is qualitative and thus generated qualitative data derived from individual interviews with international postgraduate students. These students were responding to open ended questions about their lived experiences whilst studying in a South African university. Clearly, that does not constitute a limitation. However, McDonald (2008) warns that caution should be exercised when analysing and interpreting such data due to the fact that people often respond in a way that presents them in a more favourable light. That can distort the reality and thus undermine the credibility of the findings. Also, due to a small sample used in this study, seven participants, the findings cannot be generalised. Therefore, the findings need to be treated with care as they are illustrative but not representative of the population. The fact that the findings of this study cannot be generalised to all institutions constitutes a limitation because generalisability is of paramount importance in many research studies (Rule & John, 2011). However, I should also emphasise that the aim of this study was not to generalise but to understand and make meaning of the international postgraduate students' lived experiences.

1.10 Organisation of the study

This study is presented in the form of a dissertation which is divided into five chapters, and these are outlined below.

Chapter One

This chapter introduces the study by providing a background to the problem, the statement and the rationale and the significance of the study. Objectives and research questions guiding the study, key terms of the study form part of the introduction of the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter introduces and discusses the relevant literature that provides more insights about the phenomenon of international postgraduate students' lived experiences. In reviewing

literature, international and national scholars and studies on experiences of international postgraduate students are reviewed as well as internationalisation policies of universities. As part of this chapter, the theoretical framework that was used to understand the lived experiences of international postgraduate students is discussed.

Chapter Three

The third chapter presents and describes in detail the research design and methodology guiding this study. A qualitative research approach was employed with an interpretive paradigm. Phenomenology was used as methodology for this study and was discussed in detail in this chapter. Other issues discussed in this chapter include sampling procedures used, data generation method and analysis, the location of the study and how trustworthiness was ensured.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents the data that emerged from the analysis of the transcripts of my interactions with international postgraduate students.

Chapter Five

This is the fifth and final chapter which concludes the study by providing the findings. These findings give a clear picture about the extent to which the research questions guiding the study were addressed.

1.11 Chapter summary

In this introductory chapter, I have provided a brief background to the problem and the statement of the problem. Also discussed in this chapter is the rationale for undertaking this study, the significance of the study, objectives, as well as, the research questions that guided the study. Finally, the outline of the study is briefly discussed. The next chapter will focus of the literature on various aspects of the lived experiences of postgraduate international students and other related issues.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and this one moves on to discuss the literature with a view to eliciting current and past debates on postgraduate international students' experiences, migration and integration related issues. This chapter is based on and draws from previous studies that focused on the learning experiences of international postgraduate students and their integration into South African universities. This chapter commences by conceptualising and looking broadly on the origins and history of internationalisation; the lived experiences of international students and the South African context of educational migration phenomena focusing on the notable increase of international student enrolment particularly those from the African continent (Hall, 2010). It builds on and contributes to work in the field of internationalisation, with a focus on an education migration phenomenon that can be traced back to the Renaissance ages (Hirilal, 2015; Sehoole, 2011). It is then narrowed to focus on examining significant internationalisation features of South African universities with a special focus on national and institutional policies and their role in integrating international postgraduate students into their student community (Nzivo & Chuanfu, 2013).

In the second section of this chapter, the theoretical framework that guides this study is explained. This framework is based on the systems school leadership theory which subsequently provides the lens through which this study and its findings are viewed. The chapter is then concluded with a summary of what has been discussed.

2.2.1 Understanding of internationalisation in higher education

Knight (2004) provides an in-depth discussion based on 20 years of examining, meanings, and definitions of internationalisation. Defining internationalisation is critical and needs to be addressed for South African higher education to develop policy priorities for the internationalisation of higher education. Internationalisation remains a complex and rich term that has various dimensions and meanings attached to it. The meanings of globalisation and internationalisation remain contested and are defined differently by different people (de Wit, 2006; Knight, 2006; Scott, 2006). Globalisation is regarded by Altbach, Reisberg, and

Rumbley (2009) as an inevitable reality of the 21st century that has had and continues to have influence over higher education. In higher education, internationalisation is a result of globalisation (Arambewela & Hall, 2013). Globalisation is underpinned by concerns of integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution, the universal role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Dzvimbo & Moloi, 2013). De Wit (2011) is of the view that globalisation and internationalisation are intertwined in all kinds of ways though globalisation is largely an economical phenomenon. Internationalisation is understood to be a philosophical ideology that is not economical in genesis but rather political and social as its focus is towards bringing down international barriers for the betterment of the planet (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011; Knight & De Wit, 1997). This demonstrates that the focus of globalisation is on economic dominance and has no humanitarian concerns; it is geared towards capitalism and modernisation whilst internationalisation is humanitarian and an inspiration behind several international organisations (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Dzvimbo & Moloi, 2013). Some authors suggest that the humanitarian distinguishing factor of internationalisation is what informs the various policies and programmes that universities and governments implement in response to globalisation (Altbach, 2009; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004). One dimension is that internationalisation in higher education is one of the ways in which countries respond to the impact of globalisation, whilst considering and respecting the individuality of the nation (Knight & De Wit, 2004; Knight, & De Wit, 1997).

Knight (2005) describes internationalisation of higher education as a process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of higher education institutions. However, some scholars argue that Knight's (2005) and Knight and De Wit's (1997) dimension is limited in that no further goal of the process of internationalisation is indicated, which then suggests that internationalisation is an aim itself (Jiang, 2008). To that end, Knight (2006) argues that the process of internationalisation is central to any definition and further proposes that internationalisation be defined as the process of integrating an international, inter-cultural or global dimension into the purpose and functions: teaching, research, service of higher education institutions (Knight, 2006 cited in Kishun, 2007). The second dimension is that of several countries wherein internationalisation is a means to achieve specific goals such as quality improvement, restructuring and upgrading of systems. This dimension's definition includes a systematic, sustained efforts aimed at making higher

education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economies and labour markets (De Wit, 2005). Furthermore, De Wit (2005) indicates that this dimension of internationalisation is not an aim itself, rather it is an important resource in the development of higher education towards a system that is in line with international standards and also responsive to the global environment. The dimension suited and adopted for this study of internationalisation of higher education is derived from the work of De Wit (2002) and Knight (2006) which emphasises the non-commercial aspects of internationalisation. Rather, it adopts a perspective that emphasises the historical dimension of the evolution of higher education within the South African colonial and apartheid context. Jowi (2009) acknowledges that internationalisation has been an area of interest in both academic and political circles; hence, there have been numerous studies investigating internationalisation. It is therefore, used and understood in various and differing contexts, but the most commonly used is the one that views internationalisation as a process that seeks to assimilate the international, intercultural and global dimensions into higher education (Schoole, 2016). Internationalisation in the education sector is intentional, strategic and addresses core functions of universities; teaching, learning, research and service whilst incorporating international perspective into higher education institutes (Jiang, 2008; Knight & De Wit, 1999; Knight & De Wit, 1997).

Internationalisation of higher education takes various forms including the cross-border movement of students and staff; international research collaboration; the offering of joint degrees by universities in different countries; the establishment of campuses by universities outside of their home countries; the growth of satellite learning and online distance education; online educational institutions; arrangements between countries for the mutual recognition of qualifications; the regional harmonisation of qualification systems and the inclusion of international, intercultural and global dimensions in university curricula (DHET, 2017). Internationalisation impact on higher education has resulted in “the unprecedented developments in information technology and social media, the pervasive impact of economic liberalisation and trade agreements, the increased flow of people, ideas, capital, values, services, goods and technology across borders” (Knight & Schoole, 2013, p.5). Higher education institutions have also felt the impact of internationalisation which has resulted in the vigorous recruitment of international students (Dzvimbo & Molo, 2013). International students are recruited for varying reasons by different countries such as Korea and Japan, who recruit international students as a means of building diverse research capacity (Sidhu, 2011);

or Japan alone, who have an aging population and low birth rate, and thus requires student immigration for their population growth (Pew Research Centre , 2018); the USA, Canada, and the UK offer world class education facilities (Hirilal, 2015). additionally, fee income from international students make up a third of the income for British universities (Carroll, 2005); Singapore offers close proximity and security for India, and this is subsequent to the racial attacks on Indian students in Australia (Anderson & Bhati, 2012). Finally, for SA, recruitment of international students is for intellectual capital (Chinyamurindi, 2018). Furthermore, SA is no different and has a range of reasons for recruiting international students such as, a way to recruit future researchers that are much needed, as a way to foster closer ties with other countries, and also to generate income especially now in the face of decreased funding, to escalate operational revenue as way of raising income from enrolments (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Arambelwa & Hall, 2013). The above is in line with the definition and agenda of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The South African specific definition of internationalisation of higher education includes an intentional process to integrate intercultural, global dimensions in higher education; to advance the goals, functions and delivery of higher education and thus to enhance the quality of education and research (DHET, 2017). This is in line with De Wit's (2011) purpose of internationalisation which is towards bringing down international barriers for the betterment of the planet.

In order to stimulate and activate internationalisation, universities have embarked on various strategies including, but not limited to, sending students to study abroad, recruitment of international students, setting up of branch campuses overseas, or even engaging in some type of inter-institutional partnership-study exchanges and foreign language studies (DHET, 2017). It is such a stimulus in South African higher education institutions that have led to more than the reported 2.5 million students studying in foreign countries and a predicted rise to 7 million student immigrants by 2020 (Chinyamurindi, 2018). To illustrate the spread of internationalisation practices in higher education institutions, there are global tools of measure influenced by world class universities, these include rankings, cooperation, academic mobility and curricular reforms (Benitez, 2019). World-class universities set international standards for teaching strategies as well as for research and service practices (Jiang, 2008; Sutrisino, 2017).

Internationalisation of higher education in SA has taken various forms, such as the cross-border movement of students and staff; international research collaboration; the offering of joint

degrees by universities in different countries; the establishment of campuses by universities outside of their home countries; the growth of satellite learning and online distance education (including online educational institutions); arrangements between countries for the mutual recognition of qualifications; the regional harmonisation of qualification systems and the increasing inclusion of international, intercultural and global dimensions in university curricula (DHET, 2017).

The Mediterranean is currently faced with a challenge of Syrian immigrants. The Turkish government has responded favourably to the millions of Syrians, a significant number of whom look to higher education as a pathway to a better life as students and as academics, and internationalised the policies and functions of universities (Benitez, 2019). The Turkish government has also revised its academic and financial admission policies. Universities are to admit Syrian refugees without proof of previous academic qualification as special students, and Arabic programmes have been established which are now offered at eight universities in southern Turkey, situated in quite close proximity to the Syrian border (Council of Higher Education [CHE], 2018). This is all in response to a crisis in the internationalisation of higher education being primarily voluntary and part of a deliberate institutional (and in some cases governmental) policy. In the case of Turkey, because it is in response to a crisis, internationalisation is deemed, to be somewhat, forced (Benitez, 2019).

Higher education in the African continent is growing at a fast pace, with enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa nearly doubling from approximately 4.5 million in 2000 to 8.8 million in 2016 (UNESCO, 2016). African governments, such as those of Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Nigeria are working on strategies to increase the number of doctoral graduates by the thousands over the next decade in order to improve the quality and rankings of their universities (UNESCO, 2016). This global body also remarkably rates South African universities as the best performers on the continent – even though the country has 26 universities against a population of 54 million (UNESCO, 2016). Of the top 15 universities in Africa ranked in the 2019, *Times Higher Education*, seven are from SA. This is attributed to the highly-cited research, strong international outlook and the ability to attract endowment funds from industries (The Times Higher Education, 2019).

Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology reported a total of 73 859 international students enrolled in public HEIs in 2016, comprising 7.1% of total enrolment in

public HEIs, 73% were from the SADC countries, 16% from other African countries, and 9% from the rest of the world (DHET, 2017). Of these students, some are enrolled for postgraduate studies; Master's degrees (22.4% or 9 345) and Doctoral degrees (17.8% or 7 444) (DHET, 2017). South African higher education institutions are keen and actively strategising towards growing the numbers of international students, particularly at postgraduate level. Increasing the enrolment of international postgraduate students will stimulate the country's intellectual growth and research capacity (Schoole, 2016).

It has been observed that there is a growing need for and a long-term benefit of recruiting students from the Southern African region and other parts of Africa and globally whilst continuing to intensify access for South African students. A framework and infrastructure that engages various relevant government departments should be formulated for the purpose of promoting internationalisation (CHE, 2016). The government has committed to inter-departmental integration and cooperation for efficient and successful internationalisation processes (DHET, 2017). The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology (DHET) ought to coordinate and streamline their visa and study permits processes in order to facilitate ease of access into SA for inbound international students without compromising the country's security and border controls (Schoole, 2011). International students are to have rewarding social and educational experiences whilst in South Africa, as they would have had in any other host country (DHET, 2017).

Schoole (2006) is of the view that enrolling students from the region would be a means of contributing to their human resource development and an expression of commitment to African development and the African renaissance. Recruiting African international students would also be a source of revenue for South African institutions and the country (DHET, 2017). Priority for universities is now to increase capacity and attract a significant international student population; and an increase in the number of Masters and PhD students and, by 2030, over 25 percent of university enrolments should be at postgraduate level (DHET, 2017). SA is seen as a knowledge hub on the African continent, and thus a sought-after destination for international research collaboration (CHE, 2016; DHET, 2017; Hiralal, 2015; Mohlathe, 2010). South Africa is known to offer many attractive research opportunities to international researchers, and is, therefore, a gateway to Africa for researchers from other countries (Hiralal, 2015; Schoole, 2011). Therefore, the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology's

Internationalisation of Higher Education Draft Policy Framework (2017) recommends that activities by South African higher education institutions, should prioritise South Africa's interests. Where possible and relevant, the following order of priority must be adhered to, namely, the interests of SADC states; then the rest of the African continent; the global South and emerging economies, and ultimately, the world over this is in line with the SADC Protocols. Initiatives to attract international talent from other African countries should, therefore, be balanced against South Africa's obligation towards the development of the African continent (Sehoole, 2016).

Sehoole (2011) places emphasis on internationalisation of higher education becoming a core concern for most institutions and touches on issues of relevance, quality, prestige, and competitiveness. A bouquet of processes combines to intensify interest in international higher education, namely, the growing number of mobile students and academics; the impact of international rankings; the need to educate globally competitive graduates; and quite significantly the globalisation of English as the international language of higher education has opened up national higher education systems to globally mobile students and academics (Chinyamurindi, 2018; Hirilal, 2015; Sehoole, 2011). While speaking at a summit in 2015, South Africa's Minister of the then Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Dr Blade Nzimande, reiterated the importance of internationalisation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIS) saying that, "Building African universities does not mean creating universities that are globally disengaged. They should be globally engaged, but not only by being consumers of global knowledge: They should be producers of knowledge as well, the knowledge that is of relevance locally, inter-continently and globally" (DHET, 2015, p. 6).

Other visible aspects of internationalisation are students' mobility which has posed a massive challenge on higher education in ensuring that international opportunities are justifiably available to all (UNESCO, 2019). This has led to institutions seeking responses to two imperative questions: Firstly, to what extent are policies and practices aligned with the goals of internationalisation? Secondly, what policies and/or practices impede efforts to internationalise at universities? South African universities have prioritised internationalisation with vital goals evidenced by links with over 250 international institutions which facilitate ongoing collaborative academic partnerships. South African universities have committed to advancing African scholarship in the highly competitive global higher education environment. Nevertheless, there remains the opportunity for growth, specifically in responding to the

increase in the availability of online knowledge which is driving the expansion of access to university education globally. Internationalisation should therefore remain high on the South Africa's higher education policy agenda. The higher education sector needs to ensure that South African universities rise to the forefront of higher education globally (Kishun, 2007; Dolby, 2011). South African universities' leadership will need to articulate a vision for internationalisation and implement changes that promote internationalisation (NASULGC, 2004).

2.2.2 Internationalisation history

In his review of the literature on the internationalisation of education, Sehoole (2006) demonstrates some of the historical features such as the fact that in Europe, during the medieval ages, there were nomadic scholars who, in search of further knowledge, moved from one country to another. Additionally, characteristic of that period is the use of Latin as a universal language. There is a close resemblance to the current features of internationalisation which also sees mobile students and the dominance of the English language (Sehoole, 2006). The 19th century culminated in the emerging nation-states due to political and cultural nationalism, bringing with it the prohibition of study abroad and an introduction of indigenous languages in the place of Latin (De Wit, 2002; Dolby 2011). Universities became institutions that served the professional needs and ideological demands of the newly established nations in Europe (De Wit, 2002). Further, Scott (1998) observes that universities were national institutions first before becoming international institutions. During that period, international higher education was defined by the export of higher education systems, the dissemination of research, and the individual mobility of scholars and students. It was in the global transfer of various facets of higher education to colonies that saw international higher education reach South Africa's shores (Sehoole, 2006).

The establishment of higher education in SA was intended for European students (children of immigrants) and not for indigenous children (Lee & Sehoole, 2015). Indigenous black African students were thus left with no choice but to study abroad (Lee & Sehoole, 2015). As a result, many had to travel to the USA or Britain in search of higher education opportunities. Consequently, South African education did not only have elements of internationalisation in terms of inward mobility of international students from Europe but also in terms of outward

mobility of black South Africans in search for study opportunities overseas (Schoole, 2006). The outward mobility was propelled by the racial segregation of that era that persisted, at least on paper, until 1994. Nevertheless, missionaries attempted to provide black South Africans with higher education training reporting some success much earlier in 1916 with the establishment of the South African Native College which later became the University of Fort Hare in 1951 (Schoole, 2006).

2.2.4 Internationalisation policies

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) has decided to reprioritise Africa's agenda from the struggle against apartheid and the attainment of political independence to continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security amongst other issues aimed at repositioning Africa to becoming a dominant player in the global arena. Part of the AU Agenda 2063, there is a vision of a Pan African university (PAU) which came as a step towards creation of high quality continental institutions focused on quality training research and innovation (PAU Treaty, 2016). The AU treaty has amongst others a principle of strengthening existing African institution at graduate studies level to enable them to serve the whole continent (PAU Treaty, 2016). Objectives of the PAU treaty (2016) are to stimulate collaborative, internationally competitive, cutting edge research within the African universities, and also enhance mobility of students and academic staff among African universities for the improvement of training, research and innovation.

Zoning in on the region, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training (1997), (ratified by the SA Government in 2000) makes provision for facilitating the mobility of students and academics in the region for the purpose of study, research, teaching and any other pursuits relating to education and training (DHET, 1997). The SADC's (1997) key stipulations for member countries are that higher education institutions in the region should reserve at least 5% of admissions for students coming from SADC nations other than their own; that higher education institutions should treat students from the SADC countries as home students for purposes of tuition fees and accommodation; that there is agreement to work towards harmonisation, equivalence, and in the long term, the standardisation of university entrance requirements with due recognition that preconditions to ensure feasibility and equitable implementation are met.

Previously, the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology had no clear policy on internationalisation and student mobility as they were still in the process of defining internationalisation (Kishun, 2007). According to Kishun (2007), in a maturing democracy there was, therefore, a need to develop and adopt a comprehensive Higher Education national policy that addresses internationalisation objectives and strategies, international students' mobility and ease of integration into South African universities. The SA Policy Framework for the internationalisation of higher education is in line with the (SADC) protocols on Education and Training (1997), making provision for facilitating the mobility of students and academics in the region for the purpose of study, research, teaching and any other pursuits relating to education and training. Another stipulation is the harmonisation of the academic year of universities in order to facilitate staff and student mobility, as well as to work toward the relaxation and eventual elimination of immigration barriers that hinder staff and student mobility (DHET, 2017).

There is another important policy affecting international students which is the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002. The South African Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002, Section 13, stipulates that, study permits may be issued to foreigners intending to study in SA for a period that is longer than three months. The permit is issued at an *ad hoc* fee under these conditions; sufficient financial means, guarantee of tuition fees, periodic performance updates. It is important to note with concern that the Immigration Act of 2002 has done little to attract international students to SA as reflected on the findings of a study by Kishun (2007). The DHA Draft Migration Regulation (2014), Section 12 of these regulations stipulates conditions of study visa and those are provisional acceptance to the intended institution; proof of registration to be provided within 30 days of registration; visa issued for the duration of the course but not longer than 4 years; notifying the Director-General when requiring to extend period of study. The visa shall lapse should the holder fail to register.

International students indicated that these regulations present a stringent and cumbersome study permit/visa application process. Furthermore, the 2014 Draft Immigration Amendment Act does not bring sufficient flexibility to attract international students for study in SA. Muthuki (2013) corroborates this view, further pointing that the DHA controls are becoming increasingly stringent in issuing study permits, thus putting SA amongst countries with cumbersome migration controls.

South African higher education institutions also have their own policies to attract international students and moving up to be ranked as one of Africa's most prominent universities in terms of its academic quality and research impact. Vision and mission statements of the majority of South African universities, promote and foster tolerance and respect for diverse cultural and social values. One of such policies common amongst them is the university's language policy which recognises English as an international language of scholarship and therefore, has made it the main language of administration and business at the university. This study, therefore, analyses the lived experiences of international students in relation such policies, values and mission of the university.

2.2.5 Lived experiences of international postgraduate students

The review of literature has focused on historical and policy dimension of higher education and internationalisation. In this section I move on to focus on what literature says about the lived experiences of postgraduate students. Lived experiences are the representation of the human experiences, choices, options and the knowledge from which these experiences are gained and factors that influence one's perception of knowledge (Van Manen, 2015). Participants' own their experiences and can offer researchers an understanding of their thoughts, commitments and feelings through telling their own stories, in their own words, and in as much detail as possible (Findlay, 2010).

Lived experiences of postgraduate students choosing SA as their host country are important in drafting internationalisation strategies. Menzies and Baron (2014) highlight that international postgraduate students' daily lives involve dealing with systematic issues such as study permits, labour laws, and immigration, academic and psychosocial issues. There are policies and procedures that have been put in place to ensure ease of access to education and increase the number of international students in higher education and embrace the diversities they bring into the universities (DHET, 2013). For international postgraduate students, universities are meant for learning, knowledge advancement, care and support (DHET, 1997), and not of alienation and disenfranchisement (Rajpal, 2012). However, Everatt (2016) argues that many students find South African universities alienating, overwhelmingly white and Eurocentric space.

Upon arrival at a university, students are confronted with numerous negative experiences such as imported norms, lecture room sarcasm, unfamiliar customs (Crush & Pendleton, 2004 Pilane, 2016). Given all of this, the entry into a foreign country's university can be a traumatic experience. This becomes even more traumatic for international students who may experience the university as a comparatively alien social and economic environment (Bakhtiari & Shajar, 2006).

Negative emotional responses are routinely experienced by individuals in cross-cultural transition such as acculturative stress which can manifest in the form of anxiety and depression (Otlu, 2010). A study done in Australia found that there are other background variables such as the degree of difference between the culture of origin and host culture, language proficiency, gender, age, education level, status, self-esteem that will have an impact on the experiences on international students studying in a host university (Cameron, Kirkman, 2010). International students who adopt an integrative acculturation strategy, valuing both their original and the new cultures and maintaining relations with both groups, reported experiencing much lower levels of adjustment stress (Li & Gasser, 2005). This study also brings to the fore the importance and value of cultivating relationships with local students.

Empirical research across a host of contexts suggests that integration is related to positive adaptation experiences (Berry, 2010). The integration process of international students evokes a number of questions including the following; What does integration mean? How is it achieved? Do people integrate by fusing home and host cultures? Are their identities situational sometimes 'traditional' and sometimes 'modern'? Why do people assimilate or separate? Is it because they choose to or because they do not have the skills and abilities to integrate? How does marginalisation occur? Does it arise from constraints and deficits or is it a genuine option? (Kim, 2001). For instance, for many years, it was assumed that international students had to unlearn their home culture and assimilate into their host culture in order to achieve high levels of host-culture competence. However, students prefer to retain their home culture while acquiring host-culture competence (Kim, 2001). This indicates that it is possible to internalise more than one cultural schema and be well adjusted in multiple cultures (Pilane, 2016).

The majority of research undertaken in relation to international students has focused on curriculum adjustments, the development of language competency to meet language requirements for entry to host institution (Arkoudis, 2011). Internationalisation in higher

education institutions has significant financial, organisational and social ramifications for the international student (Evans & Stevenson, 2011). From the perspective of higher education institutions, the enrolment of international students, apart from providing educational opportunities for students worldwide to advance their career prospects, also provides a financial buffer in an ever competitive and financially struggling sector (Arkoudis, 2011). Therefore, higher education institutions should acknowledge that the population of international postgraduate students is valuable and have special needs and challenges that needs to be considered.

Universities are actively recruiting and attracting students from all walks of life and different cultures (Kamsteeg & Wels, 2012). It is estimated that about two thirds of international postgraduate students studying in SA originate from neighbouring African countries, and only a small number are from Europe and North America (Ayliff & Wang, 2006). The Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology in their post school education and training report of 2018 shows that of the 16 393 international students enrolled in South African higher education institutions 10 949 of them originate from the African continent (DHET, 2019). This is indicative of a steady increase for South African universities emerging as sought-after destination. They now have to address the challenges that these bring with them as well as those that the host country poses upon these students (IESA, 2009).

2.2.6 Challenging experiences that international students face

Research has found that international postgraduate students encounter more problems than the host or local students despite being a vital part of these universities (Ward, 2016). Klomegah (2006) argues that international postgraduate students experience myriad of problems such as adjustment to the new culture, scholastic differences, language problems, disagreements and disputes among fellow nationals, impact of advancement in home countries, discord with local populations, racial discrimination, inability to handle the new found freedom, isolation, uncertainty and despair. Shedding one's heritage and home country and shifting toward the values and behaviours of the host country is a challenge and it has been suggested that the longer the distance or dissimilarity between cultures, the more difficult it becomes to achieve integration (Ward, 2016). In addition, this also increases acculturative stress and negatively impacts psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of these students (Ward, 2016). While university students generally face many challenges, international postgraduate students are

even more susceptible to even more problems (Nganga, 2019). Magnusdottir (2005) found that there is a thin line between threatening experiences and strengthening experiences. The vulnerability of being an international postgraduate student can only be documented by exploring their lived experiences considering the fact that every individual has their in-built abilities it is therefore necessary to hear their voices (Khanare, 2009).

International students in host countries are reported to feel like outsiders seeking to be let in to a different culture (Zhang, 2012), adjusting to different life styles, and experiencing overwhelming feelings of homesickness (Khanare, 2009). Harvey, Robinson and Welsh (2017) exploring international postgraduate students nurses studying in Australia find experiences of separation from family, loneliness, guilt feelings and anxiety about the decision to study abroad, compounded reluctance to seek assistance from health professionals for fear being regarded as not coping. These experiences are conceptualised as a framework that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioural components that enables people to orient themselves in relation to one another and the rest of the world and to experience and interpret the world in similar ways (Brown, 2008; Zhang, 2012). This view is shared by Hofstede's (1984) assessment that cultural experiences underpin all aspect of human activity. It also lines up with Berry's (2009) description of cultural experiences existing simultaneously as a socially shared, external reality and as an internal reality, incorporated in each individual's psychological makeup.

2.2.7 Strategies used by universities to address international student's challenges

Universities set out goals and strategies to promote internationalisation in line with the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology's priorities of internationalisation promotion, with a focus on implementing strategies that draw on the African knowledge and experiences of incoming students from the African diaspora. South African universities have common goals of cultivating respect for diverse cultural experiences and perspectives through facilitation of inter-cultural events and discussion environments that have local students and integrated with international students into the local environment (University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan 2007-2016, 2006; Durban University of Technology Strategic Plan 2015-2019, 2014; University of Cape Town Strategic Plan 2016-2020, 2015; University of Pretoria's Strategic Plan– 2025, 2018; University of Venda Strategic Plan 2016-2020, 2014; University

of Johannesburg strategy 2025, 2017; North West University Strategy 2015-2025; 2013). Universities value and seek to promote social cohesion through understanding tolerance and respect for diversity in all its forms by adopting, implementing and monitoring policies and procedures that aim to eliminate discrimination in all its manifestations which include ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, class and disability (Sehoole, 2016).

2.2.8 Academic mobility in Africa

Africa is recording a steady increase in international student's mobility (HEMIS, 2014). This is as a result of internationalisation in higher education that has borne this phenomenon referred to as *student/academic mobility*. This refers to the outbound and inbound flow of students and academics, locals moving to study outside of their country and international students immigrating to be hosted for study purposes (Hegedorn & Zhang 2012; Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005). Young and De Wit (2019) share a similar view that student mobility is an indicator of the ongoing trend of internationalisation in higher education. According to UNESCO (2011), academic mobility is for a limited period that is designated for study, teaching or research in a country that is not the student's country of origin or residence. It is envisaged that the student returns to his or her home country upon completion of studies or research, or at the end of the period of study. Academic mobility is usually followed by a return to home country, therefore, creating an elite of "overseas educated locals" (Young & De Wit, 2019). It is important to note that academic mobility is not intended to cover migration from one country to another (Chien & Chiteng, 2012; UNESCO, 2011). Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010) view academic mobility differently, as another form of migration emanating from struggles of access to education and employment, hence, most countries have included academic mobility in their migration policies. The complexity of this phenomenon continues to present itself in career choices of academics and study options of students, the institutional arrangements to make mobility and internationalisation possible in addition to that, the incentives and constraints associated with it (Chien, Chiteng Kot, Mpinganjira, Ngamau, & Garwe, 2011; Chien & Chiteng, 2012).

Student or academic mobility, just like internationalisation, is not a new phenomenon, particularly amongst the developed countries such as the USA, UK, Canada, Japan and France (Singh & Keshari, 2014). Students from former colonies were sent to universities in these

countries to gain education and to come back and serve their native countries (Dzansi & Mogashoa, 2013; Singh & Keshari, 2014). The abovementioned developed countries are no longer monopolising top positions of preferred destinations. Students are now spoilt for choice with multiple options available and they are likely to choose places that offer them the best opportunities and thus put efforts in recruiting international students to participate in the global community (UNESCO, 2011). Recently, newer participants such as Singapore and New Zealand, have emerged with vigorous campaigns to boost international student enrolments. Similarly, countries like China, South Korea and Japan are participating by taking significant steps to improve their own higher education systems in order to attract more international students into their universities (UNESCO, 2015). Each announced international student recruitment targets China: 500000 by 2020; Japan: 300,000 by 2020 and South Korea: 100,000 by 2010 (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Arambewela (2010), Altbach and Knight (2007), Du Plessis and Fourie (2011) all share the same view that student mobility has progressed as a result of the ever-changing international developments that have given rise to developing countries becoming host countries. This is likely to continue, especially as more countries are offering courses in the English language. Qatar, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates stand out as examples that amended their national policies to accommodate an aggressive internationalisation programme, recruiting prestigious foreign universities to have a local presence with the goal of expanding access for the local student population and serving as a higher education hub for their regions (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018).

International student markets are becoming more competitive, resulting in more countries making progressive and informed efforts towards being a host country of choice for international students. There are several factors that contribute towards increasing inbound enrolments for a country's higher education institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Dzansi & Mogashoa, 2013). Some of the factors international students consider in their selection of a host country is how one would live and experience studying abroad (Schoole, 2011). Simplicity of study visa processing and ease of renewal, acceptance rates and migration policies are some of the factors that influence student's perception of a given host country (Benitez, 2019; Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005). More countries are paying attention to these factors so as to improve their processing and reducing unnecessary red tape, France and Canada share their visa issuing statistics as a way of being transparent (Chien & Chiteng, 2012; Singh & Keshari, 2014).

The other key factor for students is post-study work opportunities. In 2018, New Zealand and the UAE announced new post-study work and residency policies aimed at increasing enrolment of international students in their HEIS (Young & De Wit, 2019). Political climate is also a major factor and the US is one example of this, as their political climate has had an influence over students from Latin America and the Middle East in particular (Young & De Wit, 2019). Another example is the Brexit, UK's exit from the European Union in 2019. Higher education has been one sector in the UK that has an unambiguously positive relationship with Europe. It has been mutually beneficial for both European countries and the United Kingdom, and the consequences of this change will be destabilising for the sector (Marginson, 2018). Additionally, the Taiwanese tensions with the Chinese government in the mainland may have resulted in the drop of outflow of students (Butler-Adam, 2018). Moreover, this rings true in the case of Canada having a political spat with Saudi Arabia which resulted in Saudi Arabia recalling thousands of their students from Canadian institutions (Young & De Wit, 2019). The Fourth Industrial Revolution brings fourth another factor of influence, through online presence by means of a website or social media, international students have indicated that if the website is not detailed enough and is not easily accessible for mobile, they choose not to apply (Butler-Adam, 2018). In addition to these, international students also cite security, funding or a low fee structure, language, distance from the home country and religious tolerance as key influences in choosing a host country, hence, most countries have particularised these issues in their recruitment strategies (Dzansi & Mogashoa, 2013; Singh & Keshari, 2014).

African universities are still struggling to find footing on the international stage as the measure of research output and reputation for excellence, it is only recently that Africa has made it onto world institutional rankings (Lee & Schoole, 2015). Like in most developing countries, higher education in Africa reflects colonial policies and their colonisers that shaped the pathway of development in Africa (Altbach & Selvaratnam, 1989; Lulat, 2003). These colonial legacies affect contemporary African higher education. The most evident and dominant being Britain and France, who have left a lasting impact, not only in academic organisation but in languages of instruction and communication (Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005; Young & De Wit, 2019). An estimated 4 to 5 million students were enrolled in the continent's postsecondary institutions. According to a report by the Task Force on Higher Education and Society (2012), an estimated 150,000 academic staff work in Africa's higher education institutions. Egypt takes the lead with the highest enrolment in Africa, with over 1.5 million students. Likewise, the largest number of professional academics is at about 31,000 (Elmahdy, 2013). Nigeria is

second with close to 900,000 students enrolled in its higher education institutions, and has 153 higher education institutions, the largest number in Africa (Jibril, 2013). SA follows with more than half a million students in its higher education institutions and is third in the number of enrolled students on the continent (Subotzky, 2013). Tunisia and Libya reported enrolments of close to 210,000 and over 140,000, respectively in 2013 (El-Hawat, 2013; Millot, Waite & Zaiem 2013). Enrolment in Tanzanian higher education institutions was under 21,000 (Mkude & Cooksey 2013). Ethiopia has no more than 50,000 students in its higher education institutions (Wondimu, 2013). Guinea counts 14,000 students (Sylla 2013), Senegal has 25,000 students (Ndiaye, 2013) and Côte d'Ivoire has 60,000 (Houenou & Houenou-Agbo 2013).

Access to higher education in Africa overall is less than 3% of the eligible age group, which is significantly lower than the rest of the world (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018). This is the main reason for the surging demand for access to higher education, as Africa is on a quest to catch up with the rest of the world. Africa's challenge of providing access to higher education is not only driven by the need to keep up with other developing countries, but quite notably by the demand of populations seeking higher education study opportunities (Jouttenus & Zola, 2018). Nigeria may possess the largest number of higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, but SA's enrolments are higher when including international student's enrolment (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018).

In Africa, student mobility used to be out-bound to other continents due to lack of higher education institutions but now a movement within the continent has increased (Bajinath, 2013). This is also an observation by Lee and Schoole (2015), that domestic and intra-continental enrolment is growing rapidly, resulting in a reduced number of students emigrating outside the continent for study purposes. An earlier study by Kritz (2011) determined that difficulties in obtaining admission to universities at home, combined with perceptions that the quality of education was better abroad, led to students who could afford the costs of going to Europe, North America or anywhere else for studies to go ahead and join those institutions. Recently, there has been a notable increase in movement within the continent to SA, recording a rise of 67 % of all international students enrolling in South African universities being from within the African continent (UNESCO, 2019). Rouhani (2007) also made note of this and further categorised international students coming into SA into two categories, the major one being current inflows that have been observed from neighbouring (SADC) countries and the minor one being from countries of northern Europe and North America. Previous studies have

emphasised that the movement to SA from within the African continent is to be expected as SA's higher education sector is seen as better resourced, better developed and more diversified than most countries in the continent (IEASA, 2006). Rouhani (2007) is of the view that it is a stable political climate, stable economy and higher education free of disruptions that make SA a preferred host country amongst Africans.

The African context on international student mobility has received little attention in African migration literature, mainly because the focus is on labour migrants and political refugees as they account for most international migrations in the region (Adepoju & van der Wiel, 2010; Appleyard, 1998; Ouchou, 2008). This is despite the fact that across Sub-Saharan Africa millions are faced with the real struggle of limited access to education, especially postgraduate education (Jouttenus & Zola, 2018). The global rapid growth in higher education has increased the pressure. However, there are not enough higher education institutions to meet the growing demand, and there are not enough academics to address supply constraints in the provision of higher education (Rhensburg, Motala & David, 2015).

This therefore, is the main reason for student mobility in the region. Africa is the youngest continent in the world, with 60% of its population under the age of 25 (UNESCO, 2019). At the same time, half of Africa's youth is not able to contribute to the regional economy, given a lack of educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2019). The African continent has a huge shortage of researchers with an average of 200 researchers per million people in comparison to the world average of 1, 150 researchers per million. It is this shortage that has led to the need for higher education institutions to conduct more research on the lives and challenges facing postgraduate students in order to find solutions that will help increase the number of researchers and improve their quality of life (Nakwenya, 2019).

Though this study is focused on the inbound international postgraduate students coming into SA from within the continent to do postgraduate studies, the fact that there is an outflow of South African students cannot be ignored. Also regarded as student mobility that can be categorised is as such entails South African students who enrol for degrees at foreign institutions, South African students who are enrolled at local universities but complete part of their programmes as exchange students at foreign institutions, South African students who participate in an academic activities abroad (DHET, 2018). Institutions have an obligation to put measures in place to protect outbound students enrolling for degrees and programmes at

foreign institutions within the context of agreements between South African institutions and agencies and foreign providers. Such measures include a pre-departure confirmation of the academic status of the qualifications for which South African students enrol as degree-seeking students in foreign countries and on-going confirmation of the quality of the learning experience at the foreign institution (DHET, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, the majority of international students in SA come from Sub Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2016). This is an admirable statistic against the backdrop of apartheid and sanctions affecting academic participation. SA has moved away from this situation of her negative history to full international participation and being named a host country of choice by other African countries (UNESCO, 2016). The African higher education space is conducive and inviting for students from the SADC region, through enhanced intra-African collaboration and the stance that the South African government has taken. The Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology has outlined the following as part of its internationalisation strategic plan; student subsidies and reduced student fees for international students (DHET, 2018). Similar subsidies are made available for both domestic and international students enrolled at public higher education institutions in SA for full degree purposes (DHET, 2018). SADC countries' students pay the same tuition fees as South African students. Same or higher tuition fees may be charged for students from countries beyond the SADC. A levy on top of the standard tuition fees paid by international students is a legitimate source of revenue for higher education institutions provided that these are set at reasonable levels following transparent processes (DHET, 2018).

The emergence of SA as a sought-after study destination brings with it an array of challenges that are brought along by international students as well as challenges that the host country poses to international students (IEASA, 2009). SA, with its increasing enrolment statistics, has been reported to have horrific levels of violence and intimidation towards African international students coming into the country. Some of the challenges are discussed under a separate heading dealing with challenges experienced by international students. These students are reported to experience social isolation, hostility and feelings of hopelessness due to transition into the new environment and adapting into the new culture (Lee & Schoole, 2015). SA has had a series of xenophobic attacks (Lee & Schoole, 2015), and the #FeesMustFall students protest (Da Silva, 2016), these are some of the events that may have created an impression of an unwelcoming environment for international students in SA which could lead to a negative

impression on SA as a host country of choice. The colonial and apartheid landscape in South African higher education promoted white supremacy and dominance, as well as stereotyping of Africa (Ramoupi, 2014). Hence, most South African universities are disconnected from African realities, including the lived experiences of the majority of Africans. Most universities still follow the hegemonic 'Eurocentric epistemic canon' that 'attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production' (Mbembe, 2016). Such a landscape does not promote the development of students' critical and analytical skills to understand and move the African continent forward. Gqola (2008) asserts that since 1994, South African universities have not done nearly enough to open their students' horizons about Africa, and this contributes to the ignorance of the continent we are part of and inadvertently allowed the faceless African man and woman to remain throw-away people (Gqola, 2008). Apartheid turned black SA into 'foreign natives' within their country, guests of the South African Republic should they stray beyond the homelands to which they ostensibly belonged (Gqola, 2008). Whereas the Apartheid state sustained an onslaught on SA citizen's residential rights, the post-Apartheid state has employed similar techniques to alienate and isolate non-nationals.

Migration policy in SA is inconsistent on paper and remarkably sloppy in practice (Landau, 2010). The South African government actively promotes regional integration but throughout the country, and foreign nationals are regularly arrested and detained merely on the basis of their physical appearance or their inability to speak the right language, or simply because they fit an undocumented migrant 'profile' and students are also included in this (Landau, 2008). Although mandated to respect foreign-nationals' rights, police often refuse to recognise study permits and some of this reluctance is rooted in illicit economies where bribes are exchanged for freedom, a practice so common some police see foreigners as 'mobile ATMs' (Gqola, 2008). In part, because of the inability to control migration in practice, the issue of human mobility has become a menace, an official and popular obsession, and a convenient scapegoat for poor service delivery, crime, and other pathologies (Landau, 2008). These are some of the issues that are working against the higher education's efforts to increase enrolments of international students, such experiences are what would be unwelcome among the international postgraduate student community. Gigaba (2015) indicated as minister of Home affairs that restricting access to study permits and citizenship and access is an exclusionary measure by the government however they support academic mobility governed by the principle of equal partnership for mutual benefit (Hagenmeier, Quin-Ian. & Lansink, 2015).

The academic mobility of higher education happens primarily at an institutional level while the government plays a supportive and facilitative role. Thus, every institution of higher education is expected to have a policy or strategy of internationalisation that is able to facilitate such and the benefits thereof for the institution (DHET, 2017). Furthermore, the government may enter into strategic alliances with other countries in support of academic mobility. The government, in general, and the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology in particular, must provide opportunities for internationalisation of higher education whenever such prospects arise and these should be in line with the core mandate of universities, teaching and learning, research and community engagement (Hirilal, 2015). The DHET Draft Policy Framework (2017) recommends that internationalisation of higher education be addressed at an institutional level which, therefore, means that higher education institutions are required to set up support services for inbound and outbound students. Additionally, such students would require support with study visa applications as well as on-campus administrative support. They would also need advice regarding registration, housing, academic support, counselling, social and cultural activities. Institutions of higher education are also to internationalise their curricula in order to overcome the limitations intrinsic within international student mobility, which involves incorporating international and intercultural knowledge and abilities, aimed at preparing students to perform adequately professionally, socially and emotionally in an international and multicultural context.

2.2.9 African students' studies in South Africa

International students can be found in most African countries higher learning institutions , and are a vital part of any internationally recognized institution (Ramphela, 1999). A South African study on international postgraduate students' lived experiences and their learning moments shed light to a understanding of who these African, international, postgraduate students are and how they negotiate their learning experiences within the various social, personal and professional spaces at a South African University (Rajpal, 2012). This narrative enquiry study focused on the lives of two participants, resulting in findings that show both negative and positive learning experiances. I have noted that international postgraduate students living together and learning from one another in a multicultural context may lessen some biases, stereotyped images and thus reduce conflict situations. In the study cited above, it is reported that international students found that their expectations of the host countries were not met, the

students therefore, experienced stress and problems which distracted them from focusing wholeheartedly on their studies (Rajpal, 2012).

2.2.10 Integration into a South African university: Students' perspectives

The numbers of international postgraduate students enrolling in South African universities from the region continue to rise, bringing to the fore the need for universities to better understand and evaluate the degree to which international students are satisfied with different dimensions of their university experience such as their arrival, living, learning and support services experience (Ammigan & Jones, 2018). Integration and adjustment difficulties have been reported by international students to be partly due to inadequate preparation for their sojourn to the host country, inadequate support and assistance upon arrival, and the social isolation and discrimination in campuses, as well as unmet expectations (Mashininga, 2018).

International postgraduate students arrive in SA mainly in search for education, but are likely to find more than what they bargained for such as developing a new outlook on life in general, improve their self-esteem and confidence, and mature as a result of their independent life experiences brought about by the new culture found in the host country (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). International postgraduate students are reported to have encountered problems in adjusting to a new culture, experiencing academic differences, dealing with developments in their country of origin such as civil wars, death of family or friends, experiencing anxiety about returning home, and dealing with financial, emotional and cross-cultural challenges (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). Being an international student in a host country brings about a vulnerability that predisposes one to exploitation, and such exploitation could even be from the host institution such as; insufficient commitment towards equal opportunity; when foreign students receive low quality education or are financially exploited; and when an educational institution perceive internationalisation as a chance to sell education to "foreigners" (Altbach & Teichler, 2006). Such vulnerability is heightened by being the minority group on campus (Yao, 2016).

Realities of being a foreigner soon come to the surface upon arrival and a person is faced with personal challenges such as loneliness due to lack of familiar friends and social networks, but also the lack of familiar cultural environments (Brown, 2008; McClure, 2007). Therefore,

social support from the host institution and social connectedness become very important in ensuring that international students succeed in their new environment (Jones, 2017). The number of friends an international student has in the new environment is, therefore, a major factor in their success and a welcoming university community environment is key for international students (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). Universities only focus on the academic needs of international students, ignoring their wellbeing which is an important factor in their potential success or failure in the new educational context (Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007).

Nail, Wawrzynski and Brown (2017) explored ways in which a university community can be more receptive and welcoming to international students by limiting social and educational barriers to ensure a better international experience. The experience of international study can be harrowing for some students who experience social exclusion, language and cultural barriers, a lack of understanding, racism, and other problems such as homesickness (Nail, Wawrzynski & Brown, 2017). Because of this, significant investment is being made by institutions in securing their enrolment but the continuity of this relationship onto student experiences is rarely seen (Jones, 2017). International students bring with them an element of intercultural diversity to the institutions of higher education they are enrolled in (Lee & Rice, 2007). It is unfortunate to note that although acknowledged, institutions of higher learning still do not fully capitalise on this (Leask, 2010; Montgomery, 2010). It is therefore, critical for universities to ensure that they cultivate a relationship that extends beyond enrolment, integration support so they can become fully engaged members of the university community, just as is the case for domestic students (Jones, 2017). Fostering a welcoming university environment whilst maintaining academic quality places institutions under enormous pressure to provide adequate resources that meet the expectations of their high-paying international students (Jones, 2017).

Bista and Foster (2016) argue that in SA, international students not only have to adjust to new academic culture, demands and participation styles, but also have to adjust to different social and cultural norms, communication styles and food varieties. In the case of international students, South African universities need to shift their focus from increasing enrolment, academic integration to stay and general comfort and wellbeing matters (Kelo, Rogers, & Rumbley, 2010). In countries with well-established international recruitment, there is provision of adequate support services and resources for international students to contribute to a positive experience and serve as a key factor in attracting and retaining more international students

(Yao.2016). For host countries, it has become essential to improve international student experience so as to remain competitive in the aggressively growing global student market (Baranova, Morrison, & Mutton, 2011). Universities need to have a clear understanding of life and integration matters that affect international students so that they make efforts in providing high-quality service (Nzivo & Chuanfu,2013). In this regard, Shao and Scherlen (2011) believe that higher education leaders should view international students as customers that their universities need and therefore, should make life comfortable and pleasurable for them. Smooth integration of international students in host countries need to be prioritised as this can help develop a sense of community for both local and international students (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014).

Yao (2016) suggests that there should be interventions for academic and social integration. Jackson and Sullivan (2011) believe that the international office can be an ideal source of support for international students in adjusting to the changes and unfamiliar surroundings, another source of support that is easily available and accessible in South African universities is student counselling services. Chinyamurindi (2018) states in a study of international students at a South African rural university that the students are of the view that the international office should focus on both international and local students for integration purposes. Forbush and Foucault-Welles (2016) conducted a study that looked at the hardship and struggles of international students and the institutional failures that has led to these students never arriving at a sense of belonging but finding ways to manage the daily realities around them. Understanding the experiences and challenges can be a useful precursor to interventions that assist to improve lived experiences and wellbeing of students away from home (Chinyamurindi, 2018). With this awareness universities need to constantly review the support systems they offer international students for effectiveness and improved integration of international students.

The University of Adelaide, Australia has a unique programme that focuses on acclimatising international students to Australian culture, as well as, exploring how local students can be more welcoming to international students (Cadman, 2000). International postgraduate students are integrated through meeting with their supervisors to ascertain a better understanding of the skills they bring from their culturally diverse environments and the skills they expect to gain from the host country. Then they discuss the development of a common culture different from the culture of both students and supervisor (Cadman, 2000). Australia has been host country

for longer than SA and is amongst the top host countries and therefore, South African universities have a lot to learn from them. South African universities have to work harder to produce graduates who embrace South Africa's "African-ness", treat their peers from the rest of the continent with respect and spread this attitude among their communities (Yao, 2016).

2.3 Theoretical framework

Scholar (Imenda, 2014) recommends identifying and describing a fitting and applicable theoretical framework for a research study. Imenda (2014) justifies this suggestion that a theoretical framework guides and directs the generation of data used to check and becomes the backdrop against which the findings are explained. Internationalisation consequences are interactions between countries, in the context of higher education interactions between institutions, government, academics and students (Altbach, 2009). So, internationalisation and academic mobility need to be understood in terms of organisational or individual practices of encouraging collaboration and support working together. Systems school leadership theory though it's based on schools but is the best suit for this higher education study. It is suitable and applicable for this study in order to understand and explain the leadership exercised by higher education institution leaders in the fast internationalising world. The systems schools leadership theory is based on systems thinking (ST) that was developed by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1936 and espoused as a leadership theory by Peter Senge as a fifth discipline of his learning organisations vision (Bui & Baruchi, 2010; Hollander, 1958).). Von Bertalanffy (1956) cited by Caldwell (2012) defined a system as a complex of interacting elements.

2.3.1 Systems Schools Leadership theory

Fundamental notion of systems school leadership theory is its focus on interactions or interconnectedness, as a core distinction between open, closed and isolated systems (Bhengu, Mchunu & Bayeni, 2020). This is core of systems thinking which is renowned for enabling leaders to respond to complex challenges that non-systems thinkers would not be able to approach as it focuses on integration. This is based on the belief that component parts of a system will act differently when isolated from the other parts of the system (Bhengu, Mchunu & Bayeni, 2020). This is the belief that places value in building a sustained, collaborative climate of trust in the institution.

According to Spillane (2005), leadership is a social phenomenon that can only be best understood from a distributed and detailed viewpoint, spread over leaders, followers and their specific contexts. Whilst internationalisation and the world education is becoming more integrated, it is bringing to the fore issues of leadership practices that are relevant to current cross cultural challenges (Goh, 2009). Internationalisation is collaborative in nature and therefore will require a collaborative theoretical analysis, leaders of institutions collaborate their prior knowledge, experiences and beliefs (Spillane & Anderson, 2014). Through these collaborative efforts, institutions give and find meaning to academic mobility phenomena. Even with internationalisation, there are no two societies that are exactly the same demographically, economically nor socially. It is, therefore, imperative for leaders to have a better understanding of one's organisation as well as others educational structures (Shaked & Schechter, 2013).

Systems schools leadership theory takes a holistic view of an organisation, it is a framework of seeing interrelationships and patterns of change (Shaked & Schechter, 2013). Internationalisation is in the interest of independent organisation, government, universities and individual students and therefore should be forming alliances. Simon (2015) concurs with a form of leadership extending beyond one organisation. These leaders are not focused on one organisation but work towards success of institutions and students beyond their own. Systems school leadership theory encourages learning organisations, in this case universities, to empower each other in order to be sustainable over time (Caldwell, 2012). Fullan (2005) explains systems as extending beyond a single institution which makes it relevant for the study of lived experiences of international postgraduate students whose lives are dependent upon several organisations. Ordinarily institutions are often disconnected and individualistic in nature; however, the systems approach brings about collaborative capacity in creating strategic alliances (Hingham, Hopkins & Matthews, 2009). This is similar to Senge's view of cross sectoral alliances.

Systems leaders work intensely in their institutions whilst at the same time connect and participate in the wider community to share and acquire more experience and knowledge (Hopkins & Higham, 2007). For internationalisation, universities need to create cross-sectoral alliances, developing more forms of cooperation with non-university sectors to cope with the demands of internationalisation (Patterson, 1999).

Shaked and Schechter (2013) concept of interconnectedness has the potential to facilitate Senge's learning organisations concept in that it fosters knowledge sharing, and systems thinking and by creating a change-friendly culture that advocates for a different approach to leadership that is flexible, responsive to local demands and that brings about the needed innovation in a learning organisation (Bhengu, Mchunu & Bayeni, 2020). White and Weathersby (2005) list a number of obstacles that may be a stumbling block for universities towards becoming learning organisations such as unclear university strategy, structure and culture as well as academic clashes.

Political interest is increasing in search for sustainable improvements, hence, the examination of significant drivers for change and the key personnel involved in implementing it and those who help define the system (Glazer & Peurach, 2014). The culture of universities is distinctively different to other sectors, because academics are generally highly individualistic in their work (White & Weathersby, 2005). Sharing vision and mental models are expected to be more effective in universities that are embedded in a high societal collectivism and future orientation culture (Alavi & McCormick, 2004). In higher education, a shared vision means universities should mobilise students and external organisations until all can collectively describe the ideal university it would be impossible to develop policies, strategies and procedures that will help make that ideal a reality (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hollander, 1958).

Systems school leadership theory in South African universities was deemed appropriate in terms of assessing possible directions, particularly in relation to establishing and implementing enrolment and migration policies. Awareness and sensitiveness to collaborative networks with other universities and government department such as the DHA are important. This study was about how international students experienced life in a South African university and it is important to know how leaders at these institutions are actively implementing policies and strategies towards raising the bar and narrowing the gap (Simon, 2014). I must at this point acknowledge, because of the design of this study, it did not go as far as eliciting the views of leaders in this university about how the needs and interest of postgraduate international students were addressed or how various policies were implemented. This study restricted itself to eliciting the perspectives of the students about their experiences.

Hopkins and Higham (2007) suggest that system leadership roles, when dealing with international postgraduate students are pivotal, and should focus on curriculum adaptation so as to ensure that learning is increasingly personalised for students; development of universities as personal and professional learning communities, building relationships across and beyond each university to provide a range of learning experiences and professional development opportunities; equity and inclusion through acting on context and culture; understanding that in order to change the larger system one has to both engage with it in a meaningful way and manage subsequent change at the institutions level.

This study looked at the lived experiences of international postgraduate students also using the approach of Shaked and Schechter (2013) who proposed four main characteristics of ST, namely, leading wholes, considering interconnections, adopting a multidimensional view and evaluating significance. Higher education institutions leadership should be characterised by these fundamentals of systems school leadership theory: ***Leading of wholes***, university leadership should look at the university holistically and when devising strategies or policy changes that would have an impact on any member of the university they would be consulted for their views and contributions. University is a learning organisation and its leadership should take a holistic view of the specific issue being considered will be focused upon, internal interrelationships of its constituent parts will remain the focus and the main idea of implementing changes will be directed into the future (Bhengu, Mchunu & Bayeni, 2020). The importance of wide consultation before embarking on a new direction is key and fundamental for systems schools leadership theory (Bhengu, Mchunu & Bayeni, 2020). ***Interconnectedness***, university leaders become intentional in cultivating relationships between various elements of the university and establishing of a collaborative platform. Develop partnerships with national and international universities and enter into strategic partnership with some of them. ***Adopting a multidimensional view***, international postgraduate students should be afforded an environment conducive to learning. ***Evaluating significance***, this is for university leadership to evaluate what is priority and what is not and strategically focus on matters of significance for the country and the region such as internationalisation (Shaked & Schechter, 2013).

The systems approach is predicated on certain beliefs about the role and purpose of collaborative leadership and management in a highly competitive system of universities and the benefits of a distributed and networked approach to improvement. University leaders, using the systematic approach, directly advocate for policy changes and the interpretation of policies

and they become advocates of their programmes to governments and stakeholders (Simon, 2014). The systems approach aims to set a clear direction for improvement and provides support to enable collaboration and networking among different institutions. It is obvious that if there has to be change within institutions it must lie at the heart of systems, developed and sustained through systems and distributed leadership (Simon, 2014).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed experiences of international postgraduate students. Literature presents findings of a range of challenges and the trending yet prestigious internationalisation phenomena of educational mobility within the African continent. In the past, movement for study purposes was to universities outside the African continent and priority was to the developed countries. The advent of democracy in SA has seen its universities opening its doors to all. Previously, these universities were reserved for mainly white people and a few elite people of colour who could afford. South African universities are now competing on international stages for ratings as well as the revenue from international students' enrolments. The past few decades have recorded a sharp increase in the number of students from the region enrolling in South African universities. Various aspects of this discussion were addressed in this chapter. The next chapter will focus on research design and methodology issues.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of relevant literature on the global student mobility phenomena with particular focus on the postgraduate international students studying and living in SA. Still, in the previous chapter, the phenomena were then theoretically, framed by the systems leadership theory which is a theory that underpinned the study. This chapter discursively presents the research design and methodology utilised in conducting this study. In short, this chapter discusses the process that I undertook methodologically to gather evidence to use to address the research questions guiding the study. I first present interpretivism paradigm as a qualitative research positioning used to engage with the experiences of international postgraduate students. Thereafter, I discuss the methodological strategy, sampling, data generation methods, as well as data analysis methods. Finally, I apply and analyse issues of trustworthiness and ethical consideration.

3.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm is a thinking framework that guides the researcher (Wahyuni, 2012). Others define a paradigm as a dominant way of thinking that guides how things are done (Shuttleworth, 2008). Agreeing with this view, Creswell (2014) further asserts to a paradigm being a researcher's basic viewpoint that directs his/her action. This scholar goes further to say that a paradigm therefore, is a key concept in research methodology as it provides an underlying philosophical underpinning that guides what to study and how to study it (Creswell, 2014). A way of thinking as it is defined will, therefore, frame an approach to a research problem, and the best methods to address it (Shannon-Baker, 2016). This study sought to gain knowledge and insights about the lived experiences of postgraduate students at a South African university. This study is located within the interpretive paradigm as a crucial tool to study and interpret knowledge (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Mackenzie and Knipie (2006) claim that interpretive researchers rely upon the participants' views and opinions of the situation being studied. Interpretive paradigm adopted for this study guided the thinking approach best suited to respond to the research questions (Biesta, 2010).

There are various paradigms and they are based on beliefs or assumptions about a phenomenon under investigation (Christiansen, Bertram & Land, 2010). An interpretive paradigm is best suited for this study as it sought to understand and interpret the subjective world of human experiences in terms of its actors (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Interpretive researchers generally search for understandings and interpretations of what people are thinking or the meaning they extrapolate from context (Houser, 2011). Every effort is made to appreciate the viewpoint of the subject under study, rather than the viewpoint of the researcher, the emphasis being on understanding the individual and their interpretation of the world around them (Redmond & Curtis, 2009).

Thinking, in this study, was guided by the interpretive paradigm that is also closely associated with constructivist paradigm. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a research study is upheld and guided by assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values of a chosen paradigm, which accordingly, make it imperative to have a firm and complete grasp of the elements of that paradigm. Scotland (2012) states that a paradigm has three elements, namely, ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Ontology is the nature of reality, the knowledge that exist outside the researcher or can also be described as the very nature of the social phenomenon under investigation (Scotland, 2012). For positivist researchers, ontological stance is that of an external world with a single objective reality to any phenomenon (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). However, interpretive ontology differs in that its stance is rejects the existence of just one single reality, but argues that there are multiple realities (King & Horrocks, 2010; Schutt, 2006). The multiple realities are based on the existence of different people and the different ways people understand and interpret their world (Schutt, 2006). Ontology examines the underlying beliefs and assumptions of the researcher about any particular phenomenon. These assumptions or propositions help to orientate the thinking about the research problem, its significance and how to best approach it, and to contribute to its solution (Scotland, 2012). Multiple truths or realities are constructed by different people and are accordingly, unique because of their different experiences of the world; and these truths constructed in the interpretive paradigm, are “experientially based, local and specific” (Hatch, 2002, p.15).

The epistemological element of the interpretive paradigm is based on social realities and asks the question of how we know what we know. This question becomes the basis for investigations of many truths (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Davidson, 2000; Mertens, 1998; Schutt, 2006). The positivist epistemological stance is to remain emotionally neutral to make clear distinctions between reason and feeling, science and personal experience (Carson, 2001). Cooksey and McDonald (2011) concur and elaborate further on this, asserting that epistemology is what counts as knowledge within the world, describing how we come to know what we know. An interpretive paradigm focuses on uncovering experiences of people, about how they feel about their world and how they make sense of the world based on their experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; King & Horrocks, 2010). This epistemological stance confirms the relevance of interpretive paradigm for a study such as this one which explores individual worlds of postgraduate international students.

3.3 Methodology

A research methodology can be defined as the how a researcher accesses and reports on what is learned about reality (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). A research methodology adopted by any researcher depends upon the central research objective and questions (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The research methodology includes the different approaches employed to describe, explain and predict phenomena (Rajeseka, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013). The methodology used in this study to describe the phenomenon of international postgraduate students studying at a South African university sought to address the question of how one goes about obtaining desired data, knowledge and understanding that will answer the set research questions and make further contribution to knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). There are qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Quantitative research methodology typically answers the where, what, who and when questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Silverman, 2000). However, qualitative research methodologies on the other hand provide an in-depth and exploratory tool to achieve a clear picture of the process or how and why a given phenomenon occurs (Symon & Cassel, 1998). Qualitative methodologies typically answer why a phenomenon occurs or how it occurs (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Morrison, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Silverman, 2000). Collis, Hussey and Hussey (2003) argue that only qualitative research methodology provides

a stronger basis for analysis and interpretation because it is grounded in the natural environment of the phenomenon and it takes context into account.

When research describes life world or lived experiences it is usually considered to be phenomenology (Finlay, 2008). Phenomenology can be traced back to the twentieth century by Edmund Husserl who based it in the “belief that knowledge is based on intuition and essence preceding empirical knowledge” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). In keeping with this, the methodology is the flow of a systematic processes of researching assumptions made, limitations encountered and how those were mitigated or minimised, and the focus is on how we come to know the world (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Moreno, 1947). The phenomenological approach studies the lifeworld, the world as we immediately experience it with the aim to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature, or meaning, of our everyday experiences (Van Manen, 1997). For Moustakas (1994), lifeworld description is the way a person lives, creates, and relates to the world and it occurs in immediate experiences. Therefore, the essence of a phenomenon describes the central principles of phenomenological study which were to determine what an experience meant for the international postgraduate students who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. Moustakas (1994) defines essence as that which is common, the condition without which a thing would not be what it is.

Phenomenology as a methodology uncovers and describe the structures, the internal meaning of structures of the lived experiences (Van Manen, 1997). Phenomenology is framed by four characteristics (description, reduction, essences and intentionality). Reduction includes bracketing wherein the focus is placed in brackets; other experiences are set aside so that the research focuses on the topic and question only. However, it is necessary to emphasise that the phenomenological reduction was useful in helping to suspend, theoretical biases and presuppositions about international postgraduate students in order to be alert to emerging or experiential aspects. In arriving at essences, the “method involves the discovery of knowledge by referring to the things and facts themselves as they are given in actual experience and intuition” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 47). Intentionality indicates the connection of humans to the world which is only retrospectively available to consciousness. Focusing specifically on phenomenological approaches, Giorgi cited in Finlay (2008) posits that four core characteristics hold across all variations, namely, that the research is rigorously descriptive, uses the phenomenological reductions, explores the intentional relationship between persons

and situations, and discloses the essences, or structures, of meaning inherent in human experiences through the descriptions of the essential structures of a phenomenon. Structural themes can be derived from textual descriptions obtained through phenomenological reduction. Therefore, it is reasonable to note that qualitative research allows the researcher to employ multiple methods of data generation that will allow the participants to provide detailed views regarding the explored phenomenon in the data, which can include words and/or pictures (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). For this study, semi structured interviews were chosen as data generation method.

Depending on the relevance and nature of the phenomenon being studied, Njie and Asimiran (2014) argue that one or more than one method may be used. Polkinghorne (2005) asserts that the purpose of data gathering in qualitative research is to provide evidence for the experience under investigation. Yin (2014) claims that there are four principles of data generation, and these include the use of multiple sources of evidence, the creation of a case study database, the maintenance of a chain of evidence, and being cautious when using data from electronic sources.

As indicated earlier, this study was underpinned by and framed within the interpretive paradigm, considering that it sought to discover the essence of the participants experience in a set context (Furlong, 2013) and sought to understand subjective world of human experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The search for understanding the subjective world of international postgraduate students through their experiences whilst studying in SA makes interpretive paradigm an appropriate choice for this study.

3.4 Research design

The research design for this study was qualitative. Qualitative approaches are means for examining social reality, hence, Creswell (2009) asserts that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. In a qualitative inquiry, the focus is on discovering people's thoughts, understanding, and perceptions about the world (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). Whilst on the other end of the spectrum, there are quantitative designs which describe the world in numbers and measures instead of words, such designs would not have been able to provide answers to the questions

at hand. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative research is used in understanding the process, and produces rich and descriptive data through participants' words or images, rather than numbers. This ties in well with the interpretive paradigm's crucial purpose of getting insights about the lived experiences of postgraduate students.

Dean and Katherine (2006) explored the characteristics and advantages of qualitative research as studies that are carried out in a naturalistic setting; broad research questions are designed to explore, interpret, or understand the social context. Furthermore, participants are purposefully selected through non-random methods based on whether the individuals have information vital to the questions being asked or not. Data generation techniques multiple, and include various types of observations, interviewing that bring the researcher in close contact with the participants, as well as other techniques that may be relevant for answering particular research questions. The researcher takes an interactive role of getting to know the participants and the social context in which they live (Cohen et al., 2007; Marguerite, Dean & Katherine, 2006). The above-mentioned characteristics of qualitative research were suitable for this study in investigating the lived experiences of a specific group of students – international postgraduate students.

3.5 Sampling

Three closely linked methods of sampling were used, namely, purposive, convenient and snowball sampling respectively. Purposive sampling was employed in this study. Purposive sampling entails selecting the identified and targeted specific individuals with relevant information about the phenomenon under study (Cohen et al., 2011; Rule & John, 2011; Schutt, 2006). Purposive sampling supports finding participants where it is convenient for the researcher (Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson, 2008). Convenience sampling was chosen for selecting participants at a university that was easily accessible. In qualitative research, the sample size needs to be small enough to allow for the effective capture of individual intricacies in the analysis (Banister et al., 1994). The sample had seven postgraduate international students from the university selected from different disciplines. Selection of the most appropriate sample size is important for ensuring that sufficient data is generated (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This was a reasonable sample as it should not be too small as that may be limiting in variety and diversity of data, therefore, I considered a sample size of seven appropriate.

Brink (2001) defines snowball sampling as involving the assistance of initial participants in obtaining other potential participants. Newman (2000) indicated that snowball sampling begins with a limited number of people or cases and spreads out on the basis of referrals or links to the initial cases. The first three participants suggested other participants from their community who meet the criteria for the study, who were then approached by the researcher, some expressed their interest and agreed to participate.

3.6 Gaining access to research sites and participants

In the previous section above I have provided a brief discussion about sampling techniques I used. It is important that I also discuss how I gained access, first to the research sites and second, to the participants. Therefore, I have separated this discussion into two parts, the one dealing with access to the institution and the other dealing with accessing the individual participants.

3.6.1 Gaining access to the institution

To gain access to the university, a letter requesting permission was sent to the designated gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are people who have authority in the organisation to which they have been assigned powers to grant or withhold the researcher's permission to access identified participants (King & Horrocks, 2008). This study was based at a university and the gatekeeper's role is assigned to the Registrar of the university. To access the participants, permission was sought by way of a written letter to the Registrar of the university (see Appendix 1). Similarly, the Registrar responded by way of a letter granting permission for the study to be conducted at the university (see Appendix 2). Each participant was informed of the nature of the study and what participation in this study would involve and were encouraged to participate (Moustakas, 1994).

3.6.2 Gaining access to the participants

To access the participant's convenience sampling was used with some form of snowball sampling. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.139) posits that "convenience samples are people who

volunteer to participate in the study”. In keeping with this view, I identified and selected the first three participants based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study from the Campus Postgraduate Research Commons. The process of accessing other research participants was supported by snowballing.

I chose to conduct this research at the university in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, because of my proximity to the university students selected as participants for this study. Therefore, in my study, I have chosen specific participants to suit my criteria that is based on the data needs. Given the fact that the purpose of my study was to understand international postgraduate students lived experiences at a higher education institution in SA, participants selected are from several African states, these participants fit the following criteria: They are postgraduate students; they are from African states outside of SA and that they are studying at a South African university.

Table 1.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

	Name	Country of origin	Program enrolled	Year arrived
1	Participant A	Nigeria	PHD Mathematics education	2014
2	Participant B	Lesotho	Med Curriculum studies	2017
3	Participant C	Zimbabwe	Med curriculum studies	2017
4	Participant D	Namibia	PHD Mathematics Education	2018
5	Participant E	Swaziland	Med Languages	2016
6	Participant F	Nigeria	PHD Curriculum studies	2016
7	Participant G	Zimbabwe	PHD Social Justice	2015

This study is based at a university wherein international postgraduate students lived experiences unfolded. The criterion for selecting this university was the fact that it was convenient for me as a postgraduate student at this university. As discussed in previous sections above, convenience sampling is concerned with getting participants whom the researcher has easy access and are convenient to reach. In convenience sampling, a participant does not

represent any group and does not seek to generalise about the wider population (Cohen et al., 2011).

The participants willingly participated in one-on-one interviews and each signed an informed consent as a way of granting permission to be interviewed, audio recorded and for the publishing of the data in a dissertation and other publications with real names withheld. Two of the participants were concerned about being victimised as they had tutoring jobs in the university, I assured and informed them that only pseudo names will be used. The participants being postgraduate students themselves understood what was required and the conditions of their participation.

3.7 Data generation methods

The study aimed at eliciting views, understandings, challenges, and opportunities of international postgraduate students regarding their lived experiences as they live and study at a SA university. One-on-one interviews were used to generate data from international postgraduate students who were the main and only participants in this study. An interview is a guided one-on-one conversation between a researcher and a participant to generate data from the participant about a particular researched phenomenon (Hatch, 2002; Rule & John, 2011). One-on-one interview is, as said by Diaz (2015), the most appropriate strategy for data generation in phenomenological research. Data generated by way of one-on-one interviews is likely to provide deeper insight into people's lives and situations (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). Semi-structured interviews afforded me an opportunity to profoundly explore and address the phenomenon, letting the participants express their experiences in detail while approaching their reality in the most truthful manner (Diaz, 2015). Semi-structured interviews were designed to elicit in-depth qualitative data from the international postgraduate students to reveal the challenges and opportunities that they experience in living and studying at a South African university. I was particularly interested in conversations in which the students made sense of their authentic experiences hence interviews were considered the best strategy. Semi-structured interviews had an interview schedule with pre-prepared set of questions, while still leaving room for and encouraging probing with questions that are not in the schedule during the process of the interview (Hatch, 2002). Probing questions encouraged the participants to share more

information and for me to get in-depth clarity on the phenomena studied (Hatch, 2002; King & Horrocks, 2010).

Interview schedule had questions that asked the international postgraduate students to reveal their experiences, opportunities and challenges encountered as they are studying and living in a South African university. This schedule was developed based on the literature about the challenges that international postgraduate students face according to literature on educational migration as mentioned by scholars such as Hirilal (2015); Chinyamurindi (2018); Sehoole (2011). The above-mentioned scholars show that international postgraduate students often face student visa renewal challenges. Therefore, the interview asked the international postgraduate students to indicate the challenges they encountered when they applied to study in SA. Similarly, international postgraduate students had to reflect on the benefits or opportunities that they received since studying at a South African university. The study used a single study design which involved a specific group, being the international postgraduate students enrolled at a selected university. This data generation method became the best fit for this study because these students were already a part of their own experiences and had insights into the ways in which life takes meaning in their lives at the university, this also provides a platform for participants' voices to be heard (Cohen et al., 2011). All the interviews were voice-recorded using a tape recorder upon consent from participants so that the interviewer is fully focused on the interview and maintains eye contact without any distractions and also able to probe with follow up questions (Bell, 2010). (See Appendix 3 for the interview schedule).

3.8 Data analysis methods

All the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and participants were code named. The first participants I interviewed was given the code 'Participant A' and the last was coded 'Participant G, according to the order they were interviewed. *Verbatim* data is regarded as important as it keeps the flavour of the original data, in order to be able to gather direct phrases as this is better than using the researcher's words that might be diluted. Direct participants' quotes are rich in details (Cohen et al., 2007). Transcribing verbatim allowed me to be faithful to the exact words and phrases used by the participants, and thereafter, analysis progressed from those transcripts (Walford, 2001). The transcribed interview text was the starting point for the phenomenological analysis (Erlingson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

Phenomenological studies data analysis is procedural starting in what is termed *Epokhe*, a Greek term meaning doubt, referring to the researcher suppressing their positioning and experiences of the studied phenomena (Diaz, 2015). This is a process of efforts to make objective analysis of the data generated from participants sets aside their preconceived ideas and judgements on the phenomenon studied (Diaz, 2015). This process is also sometimes referred to by Giorgi (2009) as bracketing, which is the phenomenological reduction of the researcher's prejudices about international postgraduate students studying in a South African university. Finlay (2013) describes this process as pushing through existing knowledge, breaking away from researcher's natural attitude and finding a way to new understanding. This process was done so as to let the phenomenon be shown in its full essence, with the focus on the participants' experiences (Finlay, 2014).

The second phase of phenomenological data analysis is called dwelling. This is the process where in, researchers linger with the data, the interview recordings and transcripts until it secreted its sense and the phenomenon eventually reveals itself becomes an amplified story deposited into our understanding (Finlay, 2014). Dwelling in the data leads to the emergence of new understandings and the layered meanings come to the fore (Wertz, 2005). This is a very involved detailed process in which the researcher immerses himself or herself in the data through listening to the recorded interviews repetitively and read the transcripts repetitively to get a better sense of the whole story. Also, during this phase, verbal and non-verbal elements were scrutinised and a focus on small chunks of data with the aim of drawing meaning units whilst staying as close as possible to the participants actual words. Thereafter, I proceeded with the process referred to by Diaz (2015), as horisontalisation of data by listing every relevant statement to the topic. The following questions were used as a measure for relevance:

- Does this statement capture any substance that is necessary and sufficient in aiding the understanding of the phenomenon?
- Can this statement be labelled or conceptualised?

Through this process, Creswell (2013) posits that this is the beginning of textual description looking into what are the participants saying, and what relevant topics are expressed by what they are saying. Finlay (2013) describes third phase of this process as explicating, which is a synthesis and integration phase, the units of meaning derived from the previous stage to find emergent themes. At this stage, I grouped all the relevant statements into units of meaning

eliminating overlapping and repetitive statements. Statements that are vague were eliminated and those that were repetitive if relevant were presented in definitive terms. Clustered and labelled constituents became core themes units of meaning of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

In the fourth phase, I wrote descriptions of the meanings from the experiences of the individual participants. This process is called textural or structural description (Creswell, 2013). This has some of the exact words of participants from the transcripts. Also using structural description there are discussions on how the phenomenon was experienced by individuals in the study. Finally, according to the textual and structural analysis, the identification of the essence of the phenomenon, common elements repeated in each of the participants is done. Then a detailed description presenting the essence of the phenomenon is written, also called essential invariant structure (Creswell, 2013). This integrates all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience; representing the group as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). This analysis is structural in nature but allows for essence and meaning to be drawn beyond the textual transcriptions (Diaz, 2015).

3.9 Trustworthiness

It is always important that the findings of a research projects are regarded as valid and credible. In qualitative research, there are concepts that have been developed that are used as alternative to quantitative research terms to refer to validity and reliability of the findings. One umbrella term used is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to being able to trust research results, and this becomes crucially important when intervening in people's lives (Mirriam & Tisidell, 2016). Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research means, amongst other things, employing ethical practices in conducting your investigation (Mirriam & Tisidell, 2016). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative researchers establish the trustworthiness of their findings by demonstrating that they are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable, and these criteria of trustworthiness are discussed below.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility for the study is “established if the participants agree with the constructions and interpretations of the researcher” (Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p.271). There are many techniques that researchers can use to establish credibility of the findings. For this study, participants were sent the transcripts to verify their contents. This meant that the participants are in agreement with the *verbatim* transcripts as well as with the realities constructed from the interviews in which they participated, then the study is credible (Conrad & Serlin, 2011).

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability is assured by way of, amongst other things, triangulation of data sources where multiple participants or different methods of data generation were used (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, cited in Conrad & Serlin, 2011). According to Conrad and Serlin (2011), transferability of research means exploring the possibility and the need for data to be useful to others in similar situations and with those sharing similar research questions. In this study, transferability is making the data generated available by providing a paper trail for other researchers to utilise (see appendices). In addition, multiple participants were used as a way of ensuring transferability.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability explores the process of data generation and interrogates whether it is consistent, reasonable and stable over time; and across researchers and methods (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). The consistent data generation method was used for this study.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability means that the data can be confirmed by someone else other than the researcher (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). Confirmation of findings reflected the views of the participants and not the biases and prejudices of the researcher (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). In addressing confirmability in this study was done at different levels. The first related to confirming interpretation during the interview process. As a researcher, I used member-checking technique to check and verify my understanding of what the participant was saying. At another level, I

sent the transcripts back to each participant for them to confirm the accuracy of the content of what transpired during the interviews and/or refute it.

3.10 Ethical considerations

It is a universal requirement that research should be conducted in an ethical manner. Research-ethics requirements involve three standard principles: autonomy, non-maleficence, and beneficence (Rule & John, 2011). The main idea of the principle of autonomy is that the personal autonomy and self-determination of the participant should be upheld without compromise (Rule & John, 2011). This then requires the participant to be thoroughly informed about the study and be allowed to decide to participate or not from an informed position (Rule & John, 2011). Non-maleficence holds that the research does not cause any harm to the participants in their participation in the study (Rule & John, 2011). Beneficence provides that it is for the good of the public and suggests that the research conducted should contribute to the public (Rule & John, 2011). In this study, all three ethical principles are observed.

I requested for and obtained permission to conduct this research from the university gatekeepers, which, in the case of this study, is the Registrar (See Appendix 1) Thereafter, I applied and obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct this research (See ethical clearance certificate, page. ii). Participation and involvement in the study is voluntary for all participants, a letter of consent was given to all informing them about the purpose of the study, that they could withdraw at any time and assured them of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants signed a declaration permitting me to interview and audio record them and also agreeing to be part of this research study (See Appendix 3.1 for letters of consent and declaration). To guarantee non-maleficence, I ensured that the study did not pose any danger to the participants in any way, the one on one interviews were conducted in a safe environment and that pseudo names were used for the names of the participants to ensure anonymity, the university name is withheld as well (Cohen et al., 2011). There was concern from some of the students who refused to participate out of fear of being victimised, however others once they were informed that their identities will be protected by use of pseudo names became comfortable and participated freely. To ensure beneficence I have made the information gathered through this research available to institution leaders and registrars, to

allow them to better apply it to their international student integration to South African universities.

3.11 Limitations

It is a widely accepted fact that any research will have some elements of weaknesses called limitations. However, it is also important that such limitations do not undermine the trustworthiness of the findings. This was a small scale study sampling seven participants from one institution. Thus, the findings of this research cannot be generalised to all institutions, and this is a limitation because generalisability is of paramount importance in many research studies (Rule & John, 2011). However, the aim of this study was not to generalise but to understand and make meaning of the international postgraduate students' lived experiences.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology adopted to conduct this study. The next chapter will focus on presenting and discussing in detail the data that was generated through semi-structured interviews as has been described in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed how the study was carried out including the discussion about data analysis process. This chapter presents the data that emerged from the analysis of the interviews. The study was undertaken to explore the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying at a South African university. As a confidentiality measure, the following codes were assigned to each participant, that is, Participant A- Participant G.

Phenomenological analysis of the transcribed interview data was carried out as discussed in Chapter Three. In the data analysis process, the experiences and ideas about the phenomenon were consistently bracketed so as to allow only the participants' experiences to come to the fore, not distorted by my biases. Although I have provided a detailed description of the analysis process, I thought it prudent to remind the readers about it in this section as well. The analysis process started with me repetitively listening to the interview recordings and then repetitively reading the interview transcripts in order to identify significant statement relevant to the topic and the research. Repetitive and vague expressions were eliminated or presented in more exact descriptive terms. Statements were then clustered into themes or units of meaning. I then drew essences from what had been described the participants experiences collectively. This process also included verbatim quotes from the transcribed interviews to support these essences. Lastly then I wrote composite description that presented the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). After the discussion of the participants' backgrounds, the findings will be presented.

The units of meaning that emerged were financial challenges, identity, language, sports participation, accommodation university life, acculturation, and challenges with visa applications and approvals and supervisor interaction at the end. Generating and analysing this research data was both an insightful and an interesting experience that broadened my understanding of notions that seemed so far from my reality. I noted with interest how keen the participants were to freely express themselves in sharing their experiences as international postgraduate students studying at a South African university.

4.2 Data presentation

The data produced from the participants' background included number of years in South Africa, country where undergraduate studies were done. This is presented on a Table 4 below. International Postgraduate students were all from a university in South Africa and pseudonyms have been used in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

Table 2 Participant's background

	Name	Years in SA	Country of undergraduate study
1	Participant A	5 years	Nigeria
2	Participant B	2 years	Lesotho
3	Participant C	3 years	Zimbabwe
4	Participant D	1 year	Namibia
5	Participant E	3 years	Swaziland
6	Participant F	3 years	Nigeria
7	Participant G	4 years	Zimbabwe

From Table 4.1 above one can deduce that the number of the years the participants been in SA differ. Even though they are in SA for similar reasons that is to further their studies but from the interviews it appeared that although they are in SA to study but their reasons for choosing SA differ. *Participant A* has been in SA the longest he says SA was not his first choice but due to lack of resources ended up coming to SA and had family friends already studying in SA who assisted and has a study visa. *Participant G* has been in SA for four years as well and also chose to study in SA because the mother was already working in SA he therefore has a permanent resident status. *Participant B* has been in SA for two years and she is studying in SA due to her husband securing employment in SA and therefore she holds a permanent resident status. *Participant C* has been in SA studying for two years and SA was her first choice of study she started applying from 2014 and was finally able to study in 2017 and holds a study visa. *Participant D* has been in SA for one year, he had applied with the hope of studying via

correspondence only to find that he had selected full time studies and had to therefore move to SA and holds a Student Visa. *Participant E* has been studying in SA for three years enrolled with the guidance of former colleagues who had been studying their postgraduate studies in SA, she has a study visa. Participant F has been in South Africa for three years and is finalising his PhD studies and is looking to apply for permanent residence but currently holds a valid student visa.

(a) Financial survival comes down to Rands and cents (b) Being a foreigner in foreign land! (c) Misunderstandings about language issues (d) Traumatic experiences surrounding accommodation issues (e) Complexities and paradoxes surrounding participation in sports (f) Practice what you preach! Experiences of international students' life at the university (g) Trial and tribulations of gaining access and staying in the country (h) Supportive academic environment: Supervisor interactions (i) What the university leadership ought to do.

4.2.1 Financial needs an eminent threat to survival

South Africa is one of the strongest economies in the African continent, more often than not students who come to study in SA are from struggling economies. The common view amongst international postgraduate students is that studying in a South African university is challenging financially. Also it came out very strongly that international postgraduate students are charged fees that are higher than local students. This is how Participant A commented about student fees:

.... and international students from outside of South Africa pay something else and it is not the same as local students. So, there is always something more from international students' like this year policy that you have to pay 100% fee before you even start your studies; it's a way of saying international students go....

Participant B also expressed that it is expensive as the university fees are high and funding is reserved for local students only.

.... with the high university fees, funding is reserved for local students only. Most policies are to make life very expensive and it gets you focused as you then want to study and finish.

Participant F also expressed having experienced the same as Participant A and Participant B when it comes to the exclusion from funding opportunities of international students. This participant argued that international students are excluded from financial benefits.

.....This is because there is a lot of exclusionary policies that tend to exclude the international student from most financial benefits in the university.

Participant A constantly referred to the fees issues as a very sensitive one and even raising that the university changed its policy at registration time; all the fees were due upfront and he argued that they had not previously been informed of this reality and they were only made aware of it when university reopened for the year. This Participant A felt that such a decision caused them a lot of inconvenience as international students would have finalised their budgets arrangements for the payment of their fees by registration time. This is how he put it:

.....like this year policy that you have to pay 100% fee before you even register and start your studies it's a way of saying "international students, go if you have not paid". You would have said that if you are applying, you have to pay 100% fees upfront not when you have already given people admission and they have made arrangement on how they will pay their fees and now you want them to pay 100% it doesn't make sense.....

Participant B brought another dimension to this debate by expressing the kinds of difficulties they face when trying to get financial aid but she also highlighted the resilience involved as they have to soldier on despite the financial hardships. Financial difficulties back home exerted additional pressures on them. She highlighted that some of them had to send money back home while also trying to survive living in SA. She argued that such pressures exacerbated the problem even further.

.....getting financial help was hard, but we had to be strong and stay focused. My husband helped here and there, but we also had to send money home and the rent is expensive.....

Participant C shared similar view as Participant regarding the issue of sending money home. In some instances, poverty back home did not appear to be the main reason for expecting financial support from the students, but it emanated from an assumption that as postgraduate students, they were old enough to support themselves and offer some form of support to family as well. Therefore, for international postgraduate students, the lack of funding affected them in more ways than just their studies.

As a postgraduate student, you are not working but, usually back at home, people think that you are old enough; they expect you to be able to support yourself and support them as well. ...you are supposed to be concentrating on your study; you are also busy trying to look for money for you to pay rental for food and everything so it will impact negatively on your studies (Participant C).

Five of the seven participant are from the SADC region and they also express experiencing fees that are higher than the local students. DHET (2017) policy framework indicates prioritisation of the SADC protocols which include but not limited to; the regions higher education institutions reserving at least 5% of admissions for students coming from SADC nations other than their own; that higher education institutions should treat students from the SADC countries as home students for purposes of tuition fees and accommodation. In bringing up the experiences of financial struggles due to university policy some of the participants expressed that their financial struggles are as a result of medical insurance that they are required to pay for in advance prior to getting a visa and annually otherwise they will not be cleared for registration unless this is paid in full. Findings of Harman (2003) study that international students due to financial strain find it necessary to take up part-time work, though student visa stipulations have restrictions on the number of hours students may engage in paid employment even this is limited to campus employment only.

4.2.2 Being a foreigner in foreign land!

The analysis of data suggests that postgraduate student from foreign countries had some negative experiences which made them feel as foreigners in a foreign land. Being a foreigner in a foreign land is how all the participants have experienced studying at a South African university. They all emphasise that applying and enrolling happens smoothly. However, once they are at the university it becomes uneasy to fit into the community of university students. International students mentioned language accent, dress code, food choices as some of the elements that made them identified at foreigners. Some indicated choosing SA in the hope that they will not be racially discriminated against. However, what happens on the ground is different as locals discriminate against them based on ethnicity.

It is such discrimination that they had to ensure and develop coping mechanisms. To that end, Participant B talked of having learnt to be strong and resilient because of her experiences as a

foreigner. She continued to say that an expression of love will be of great help for foreign students who are already feeling lost in a foreign country. She said:

....My experience has taught me to be strong and resilient as a foreigner. And showing love to all will be of help to them emotionally and psychologically. We also need to have orientation just for us, international students that informs us of all the other things that local students know or have no need of, like where is the local Department of Home Affairs offices, modes of transport, where is police station, where can you go to certify documents; where is the nearest hospital and other such services...(Participant B).

The views expressed in the above extract were shared by all participants, and they all emphasised that their lived experiences are reminders that they are foreigners. Such reminders did very little to integrate them into the local community of students and others who constitute the university community. Participant E had this to say on the topic:

.....As an international student you are constantly reminded that you are a foreigner. There are no efforts to make one feel comfortable but rather to remind you of your foreign status. In lectures cohorts, lecturers often use local examples that I cannot relate to and I find some of them are not open to other views from other countries....

Participants cited instances where they asked for directions either from university security, fellow students and getting disapproving stares and no assistance. Some have experienced segregation in lecture halls, cleaning staff, security due to being identified as a foreigner. Below are a few extracts from a number of participants that I use to highlight a number issues that reinforced the notion of isolation, lack of integration and being viewed as a foreigner.

.....When I first arrived at university, I needed directions as this was a unfamiliar to me so I asked security that were standing as a group at the gate to show me which way to go for registration, one of them responded telling me to speak isiZulu, and they continued on in their language and I left without help.....(Participant C).

..... You see, I am from Lesotho and I wear shweshwe on a regular basis and have received stares from students some have asked if there are no clothing shops where I come from, I take pride in being a MoSotho we are taught from primary school to not let anyone belittle us (Participant B).

..... you see South Africans have not been exposed to the rest of the continent and like Americans they think it's a jungle and assume that we have come to SA to escape poverty and take away what is theirs..... (Participant G).

The above extracts have highlighted the importance that people at the university ascribes to identity issues, particularly in terms of where they come from and the language they speak. All the participants indicated how difficult it was for them to be made to feel that they are foreigners in SA. The importance of one's origin in this debate contributed to Participant G highlighting some dynamics surrounding issues of origin for people (students) staying in the country or postgraduate students studying in the country. This is what Participant G had to say:

.....as a permanent resident but not a citizen, maybe your study will help the university to correctly choose which name or classification to give students because even refugees don't need a study permit cos they are here, we are still all international students but we are not required to produce medical aid we are not required to produce study visa but equally so we still have to produce international clearance even though it is quick you just go to remind them they remove the hold. Also some of the opportunities that exist in the campus you are still considered as an international student as a foreigner for instance the same as refugees....so the requirement would be you must be a South African to apply so despite you having a permanent residence you still have the status of an international...

While in the extract above Participant G expresses the view that these students at a university are identified as international students although their conditions of entry into the country differ, such discussions indicate the pre-eminence of the topic. Being a foreigner in a foreign land comes out strongly in this extract and the preceding ones. Gave an example of his own situation, he is from Zimbabwe but has a permanent resident status, the university has classified him as an international student and therefore, subjected him to all the study visa or permit requirements which are actually, not applicable to him.

Issues of identity are critical and that concept is useful understanding social and academic experiences of international students (Stewin, 2013). Identity is looked at under the framework that includes concepts such as race, gender, ethnicity and citizenship, these are the concepts that some of the participants referred to in some of their experiences. Interplay between culture, and student performance, unfamiliar culture challenge has been known since the early days of student mobility, it has become expected and now students prepare themselves for it and some universities have acculturation programs. Bista and Foster (2016) in a study on South Africa indicated that international students not only have to adjust to new academic culture, program requirements and participation styles, but also have to get accustomed to alternative social and cultural norms, communication styles and food varieties.

There have been findings of international students experiencing the university as a comparatively alien social and economic environment (Chiloane, 2016), this is made worse if they find an unwelcoming environment at the university community.

4.2.3 Misunderstandings about language issues

The data indicates that there were serious misunderstandings between international postgraduate students and the university about what the university expected from these students regarding language policy and how students should be supported in this regard. Participants felt that they were not adequately informed about language policy, particularly about bilingual approach that the university was adopting or had adopted. What they were informed about was that English was the medium of instruction, but they were not told that there is an additional language to be used, and that they had to learn that language. Because of that misunderstanding, international postgraduate students were frustrated with the situation on the ground, namely, that the university becoming bilingual, and the students were excluded from benefiting from that process. The university adopted an indigenous language (isiZulu) as an official language of teaching and learning. Whilst it was applauded by many in the country, this posed a challenge for international postgraduate students who did not know the language and did not see the need to understand it. What contributed more to their frustration is the fact that they were not informed about this before they left their home country. In addition, the university was doing very little, if any, to support them and thus integrate them into the university community.

Participants experienced language issue as a major struggle in their lives at the university, and it became clear that language issues are a major concern regarding the way in which participants are able to overcome their other struggles. The struggle of language was prevalent across all participants. Participants A, B and C have experienced the challenges posed by their inability to speak the local language. Participant A has taken the initiative to learn a little bit of the local language.

...Interacting with other students you know when you don't know the language it's kind of a problem so, you try as much as you can to learn the little you can learn; it's not easy to learn languages so interacting this is an academic environment you can use English and communicate in English....(Participant A).

The approach adopted by Participant A was also used by Participant B who also made attempts to learn the language rather than wait for the university to help them. He said:

.....It's has not been easy considering you are a foreigner, sometimes getting help from other students is hard, it's hard to get directions even when asking where library is the minute they see you are speaking English they walk away.....(Participant B).

These sentiments were also shared by Participant C who also added another dimension of local attitudes towards foreign nationals generally. This participant had this to say:

.....I met more South Africans in our department and I feel that especially during my first two years, people are not really welcoming to foreigners. Sometimes I do understand because maybe, it's about speaking in English people want to use their own language because its familiar and itis easy; so if you can't speak their language they tend to leave you behind that's what I experienced.....(Participant C).

Language has made it incredibly difficult for international students to feel accepted into the community of students at the university. Local students communicated exclusively in isiZulu with each other without considering the person who was not familiar with the language, yet being part of the conversation. This has led to international students feeling rejected and purposely excluded from conversation. Participant had this to say in that regard:

.....it's difficult for all international students especially if you don't know the language to really integrate into the system.

The views and experiences expressed by these participants were shared by all the participants. Participants in the study did not just complain about the injustices they experienced regarding the language issues. They expressed a clear understanding that the policy is clear that undergraduate students have to learn the local language (IsiZulu) and it provides modules that are prescribed. However, nothing is said about international postgraduate students. They get shocked when during lectures, lecturers use the local language extensively and forget that there are other students who are not familiar with that language.

....lecturers end up ignoring that there are students who don't know Zulu. You will find for instance, that a lecturer will put a notice up on their door in Zulu, and sometimes, a discussion can continue in class for 10 up to 30 minutes, or a lecturers can address an issue or make an announcement without realising that other students are being left out. So, the policy is good but sometimes, in the classroom it creates situations where certain people feel uncomfortable (Participant G).

Participants in this study have expressed similar views that better integration into society is facilitated through sharing a common language. However, the language barriers expressed meant that accommodation into society could only be achieved through fluency in the language

of that particular society. That is why Participant C argued that the university needs to consider conducting IsiZulu lessons for international postgraduate students. This view is similar to what participant G had suggested in relation to the isiZulu compulsory module for the undergraduate students.

Participant C recommended that if the university is serious about inviting international postgraduate students to study at its institution, it should also make provisions for integration of these students through the use of indigenous language. It should inform them timeously about the need for them to learn the additional language of teaching and learning and also should provide support in the form of for instance, a module or modules in that language. Such a move will achieve a number of outcomes such as the facilitation of effective teaching and learning, as well as, helping in the integration of foreign students into the broader university community. This is what Participant C had to say:

....I believe as university accepting international students when they are coming I think they should have a programme where they teach them IsiZulu language to help them to integrate because remember, they are not just coming to school they are coming to a society; so, they need to understand to be able to interact as postgraduate students coming maybe the first 3 months have IsiZulu classes so that they learn at least the basics of IsiZulu so that they could be able to interact with others. It's a challenge because sometimes you need help as it affects your mobility as well....

The extract above clearly shows that international postgraduate students seek solutions to problems rather than just complaining about bad situations on campus. The participant also highlights important issues relation to language use and how it can help facilitate social cohesion. Language is an important communication tool used to form a cultural reality and identity (Ngwane, 2016). The University for this Research Study was based in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and the languages predominantly spoken are isiZulu and English. Though this university attracts students from all over South Africa but by virtue of its KwaZulu-Natal location majority of its students are from within the province and therefore Zulu speaking.

4.2.4 Traumatic experiences surrounding accommodation issues

Data suggests that many international postgraduate students got a shock of their lives when they arrived in the country. Apparently, invitations are rosy, and they assume that

accommodation was included in their packages, only to realise very late that accommodation issues are not resolved. International postgraduate students once they are accepted into university for study they assume that this acceptance includes accommodation after all they are coming from another country. However, this is not true for SA universities where accommodation is a separate application process. Accommodation is one of the challenges that the participants of this study experienced. Expressing a feeling of loss and misunderstanding of admissions and accommodation issues, Participant C said:

....but I think the only thing I really had trouble with when you are coming from outside, coming to a university, the first thing that you expect is that accommodation will be available. You arrive here and the accommodation is not available and you have to look for accommodation only to find out that the residence is already closed because they are saying, you need to apply a year before but you just got accepted in January. The question is, how can you apply a year before? I think on that note that they need to provide accommodation for incoming first year international postgraduate students because they don't know anywhere besides the school [university]; so, when they get to school they need to be provided with accommodation.....

While the views expressed in the above extract was shared by other participants, the expressed experiences of Participant G added another dimension to the discussion. This participant raised the issue of racial discrimination where in, international students were profiled according to race. This participant give an example of an international student from Namibia who happened to be white and was allegedly given special treatment. Participant G experienced what he suspected to be double standards at residence where white international students were said to be treated better compared to their African counterparts. He went on to say “*they have the best life but they are internationals like all of us*”. Expressing similar experiences, Participant G said:

...the other thing is the housing residences; double standard in residences. You will find good international students, bad international students. Good international student are coming from Europe; they are treated better; there are also these visiting students exchange students who come from abroad., they have the very best life but they are internationals like us; even their clearance is done without them standing in the queue, that is one group , now you find even the Chinese. There was one time a friend of mine was from Russia and was white and the other one was white from Namibia they received special treatment; so this white person could go and complain about the residence and they get preference...

The trauma that participants talked about was limited to international postgraduate students from Africa and also black Africans. Their white counterparts from Africa and elsewhere in

the world did not suffer from the treatment that black African students suffered. Lee (2010) found that international postgraduate students experienced social isolation when they unable to get decent affordable accommodation on campus however despite they maintained their resolve and persisted despite the challenges. The university has postgraduate student's accommodation however admission to it is not guaranteed.

4.2.5 Complexities and paradoxes surrounding participation in sports

The data has also shown that international student's lived experiences are characterised by a complex interplay between skills and sports prowess and exclusion from visible participation in sports. The continent of Africa and the different countries in it are known for world class sporting talent. For instance, Kenya is renowned for its marathon runners, Egypt and Nigeria for Football, Zimbabwe for Cricket, Botswana for Netball. With this knowledge it is surprising to observe that the diversity that is seen in the university community is not reflected in the university's sports teams. This is despite the fact that students, including those from the countries mentioned above impress during training and practice sessions. Sometimes, they even assist the local sportsmen and women to hone their playing skills. However, when team selection times come, only local players are selected. Obviously, the implications are that these international students are good enough to be included in the teams, yet, the same players even assist with skills development during training and practice sessions. Participant G and Participant C both mentioned experiences of being initially allowed in to the team during practice sessions but dropped from the teams participating in the league matches. There are national quotas in terms of sports participation and these national quotas Participant G feels they are also applied in university sports.

.....I love sport especially football. You can participate because participation is open to everyone but stigma. The university does not stop anyone from participating, so within ourselves as international students there are those who feel they should pull out. For us who feel we can, we do participate. in participation you end up feel not selected to play when it comes to provincial and national competition because these national competitions the issue of representation comes in.

The extract above suggests that national politics somewhat features in the selection of teams within the university spaces. Elaborating on the influence of national sports politics on the university sports arena, Participant C had this to say:

You remember when Fikile Mbalula was a Minister of Sports, he insisted that football teams to have to have a certain number of foreign players in the teams playing each game. So, in a university what if the majority of good players are foreigners? ...we are come from football countries. What if there are seven who are good players who are supposed to all to play? They end up not playing, so in the process of not playing, they pull out; we create our own teams outside of the university set up; we end up organising our own games which do not have anything to do with the university; therefore, we cannot participate on university sports...

Participant G expressed that international students resorted to starting their own league outside of the university as they felt that they were excluded from the mainstream team but sporting activity is quite big and successful in their home countries especially football. Sports is generally regarded as means of ensuring integration social cohesion (Forde, Lee, Mills, & Frisby, 2014), unfortunately, the stories expressed above suggest that there were contradictions in what the university advocates and what it does at grassroots.

In universities experiencing high levels of immigration, community sport and recreational activities become an increasingly popular method of integrating immigrant students and the host community of students (Forde, Lee, Mills, & Frisby, 2014; Mthethwa, 2017). Though this is known and document by different scholars it's still not being implemented at this university, very little attention is given to sporting participation's potential to foster integration. Previous studies in higher education institutions found that institutions have invested heavily in sport and recreation resources purely because they believed students who engage in sporting activities for recreational and competitive purposes experience a better quality of life (Desrochers, 2013).

4.2.6 Practice what you preach! Experiences of international students' life at the university

The data suggests that what the university promised when inviting international postgraduate students to enrol for their studies did not happen when these students arrive for registration and studies. There are a number of areas of contention raised by the participants, and the experiences of these students clearly show that their experiences were characterised by contradictions between policy and practice. Emphasising a disjuncture between policy and practice, Participant G argued that its practices made him feel unwanted, and said:

Policies are good on paper only but in reality, when one arrives at the university, one feels not needed despite the attractive policies; the university needs international students to meet its quota.

Participant F and Participant E shared similar sentiments and argued that the university actions were not welcoming at all. While most participants shared similar views and experiences about negative treatment from the university, other participants such as Participant G, went further to say that unfair discrimination did not only occur against international students versus local students, but that discrimination occurred even amongst international students against others international students as some received preferential treatment.

.....the university communication is always headlined with “for local students only” this even on academic workshops that would be beneficial for all. For instance, a data analysis workshop - why would that be limited to local students only? When you look at the profile of students, you will find that the majority of postgraduate students are international. This gives us the impression that the university has no interest in the success of international students(Participant F).

The views expressed in the above extract were also shared by Participant who argued that what the university did was not just against policy, but that some policies were discriminatory in their design. He said:

.....This is because there is a lot of exclusionary policies that tend to exclude international student from most financial benefits in the university. As an international student you are constantly reminded that you are a foreigner; there are no efforts to make one feel comfortable but rather to remind you of your foreign status....

What is expressed in the three extracts above does not reflect the same picture about how international postgraduate students from developed countries are treated. The data clearly indicates that some students (particularly from developed countries) were given first class treatment, including fetching them from airports. This is what Participant G said:

....Some students even get picked up at the airport by university cars; so within the international students, there is other issues that makes this place uncomfortable.. You see, I met a student from the DRC, a female, speaks French and no one to help. But, if she was from Canada, France, speaks French she would have a translator and a chaperone to take her around campus.....

The view expressed in this extract was shared by other participants except Participant A and Participant D who maintained that they have never seen any instance where any form of preferential treatment occurred. According to them, everyone was treated the same, and they

had not experienced any unfair discrimination on the basis of being foreigners. Therefore, in respect of this issue, the university practiced what it preached. Below are two extracts from Participant A and Participant D, respectively:

...when it comes to the academic part they treat everybody equally, they don't discriminate, if you apply for ethical clearance it takes the same process for all... (Participant A).

..... I don't think there is much of a problem when it comes to that from my experience maybe somebody else may have experienced something else., I can even say that some want to work more with international students than local ones.....(Participant D).

Besides unequal and unfair treatment debate expressed by some participant, there is another issue where the university did not practice what it preached. Almost all the participants reported not understanding the role of international office other than its role of clearance for registration. On paper that office is doing a host of things that are meant to support international postgraduate students. In practice, it only clears international students for registration. Participant C even referred to this office to be like “police” as they only check if students have met all the requirements to stay at university. This is what this participant said:

....for postgraduate students, there have never been a meeting with an international office or an introduction on what they do. It seems as if they are police; they are just checking. I don't know if they are there to help international students or what they stand for. Now they are police to check if you have the requirements to stay at the university. I don't know as an international student, if something happened to me who do I report to? When you hear the word international office we think they are the ones who could help us but we don't know their role because we were never told we don't know do they even have programmes for international students

The views expressed above were also shared by other participants including Participant E who also questioned the role of international office other than giving clearance of international students. He said that:

....International office; I am not sure what its purpose is because the only interaction I have had with them is to get clearance for registration....(Participant E).

While agreeing with other participants regarding the role played by the international office, other participants such as Participants A, C and G, these participants further complained about a lack of consultation with international students when making decision about their issues. They strongly felt that they should be consulted so that decisions made from an informed position. This is what this Participant A had to say:

.....Before they take decisions, sometimes when it comes to international students they should try as much as they can to involve international students so they understand that it's difficult.....

The lack of understanding international postgraduate students result to making decisions and/or implementing policies which do not adequately address their needs, and do not support them in doing studies. The extracts above show that international postgraduate students had mixed experiences about life at the university. It also appears as if the university pays lip service to its own policies and advertisements wherein it invites international students. One of the push for embracing international students seems to be financial, and thus, they try to increase student enrolment. Universities globally are actively thinking of ways to increase enrolment of international postgraduate students for their ratings, research output and revenue. This is the contribution of postgraduate students to the university hosting them and the country generally (Schreiber, 2014). Income from international students is not only limited to student fees but also includes their spending on accommodation, food, tourism and therefore the country economy benefits and this is what universities should be mindful of in their migration policies and integration strategies (Carroll, 2005).

4.2.7 Trial and tribulations of gaining access and staying in the country

The data suggest that while SA is renowned as one the favourite destination for international postgraduate students, especially from the African continent, gaining access to and staying in the country can be characterised as full of trials and tribulations. Participants presented mixed emotions regarding their stays in South Africa. This was due largely, to the way in which their study visa or permit were handled by the government. Participant A made reference to 2014 when a huge number of international students had to return home due to delays caused by changes in government migration policy. This is how Participant A put it:

....When we tried to renew our visa in 2014 we had obstacles. In as much as it's not the university management matter, the Department of Home Affairs experienced that because more than 100 000 international students left South Africa because of some silly mistake of [not] having police clearance. Initially, it was done that if you have a letter from police that you have already applied for it, they will grant you visa. Now, you submit your letter and it's not our fault because we send it through post office which is the right channel. Now, I am thinking that perhaps, the post office staff were on strike for so long; Now they deny us visa to renew our application because of police clearance didn't arrive on time.

Unjustified delays of visa renewals are a problem for most international students. Concerns have also been expressed by students applying at different South African embassies facing unequal treatment in the processing of visas and imposition of new additional conditions. Visa Facilitation Services Company was appointed as the agent of the Department of Home Affairs. Overall, it has become more challenging to renew a study visa, and many students have been unable to meet the new, stricter and more costly requirements. The extract from Participant E adds more light on the challenges faced by international students relating to permits renewal.

....VFS is not actually biggest problem; the problem is that what happens at the Department of Home Affairs; sometimes they give you some stupid rejection reason. You see someone who has a visa maybe went to Germany for conference and when they return, they are denied visa, saying that their visa to Germany is invalid. This kind of thing; I don't know if they are conducting workshops for the employees there at Home Affairs or not. However, for the university's sake, what I am trying to say is that for their students; for the life of international students to be easy, I think that they should be able to push these policies if they give admission, they should send admission list to Home Affairs or can even solicit for the Home Affairs to have their visa facilitation centre for study visa in the school or even organise workshop where they come regularly to talk to international students if you cannot bring office down to the university....

For some such as Participant C, there really has not been a challenge with Visa applications. This is what this participant had to say:

.....When I went to get a visa that's when I really maybe a little hitch but it was on the Zimbabwe side because many people are applying so they tend to be a little strict but I had all the papers needed so I applied and I got my visa I think soon after the Christmas holiday maybe 2 or 3 January somewhere there I was called to come and get my passport with the visa, so to me the application process was ok I likes it... (Participant C).

Some of participants indicated that they are aware that they can pursue a PhD for the sake of citizenship and gaining acceptance into the country because of various scarce skills here in South Africa. To illustrate this point, the Participant E said the following:

...Most international students are excluded from funding on the ground of not being permanent residents, hence most of the foreign students will then seek permanent residency more.....(Participant E).

Students coming to study in South Africa need a valid passport, a study permit as well as medical and police clearances. These requirements have been perceived by students to be significant obstacles to studying in SA, they have been called bureaucratic hindrances with

some irritation value (Ojo, 2009). It seems that policy statements on internationalisation have not translated into a coherent approach to dealing with students across the various government departments (ASSAf, 2010; Cross & Rouhani, 2004). Ease of access to country is one of the criteria to choosing a host country, SA has a cumbersome process that is likely to discourage potential international students. These are factors that are outside of the university control, the university is not responsible for issuing visa, study permits to the international students, and they acquire these official documents from department of Home Affairs. It is therefore important to note that the interaction between the university and different departments is key (Ojo, 2009).

4.2.8 Supportive academic environment: Supervisor interactions

Data generated indicate that international postgraduate students' lived experiences were also characterised by a supportive environment in which academic staff provided enriching spaces where their research journeys could flourish. When participants were asked about their ability to adjust to the university community of students and the general university environment, they all emphasised that they were supported by their respective research supervisors. This is what Participant C had to say in this regard:

I was lucky because my supervisor told me about all these things. Ah, my supervisor was ok. You know, Prof is so good; she is helpful; she motivates you. Our supervisor was very good and sometimes I wish she was still here; when she was around I always wished I could do more but now she is gone, so it is tough.

These sentiments were also shared by Participant D, as well as Participant A. The latter participant went further to highlight that the support was not unique to his supervisor but other lecturers were also supportive, open-minded and did not have any particular schedule to follow for consultation purposes. The extract below captures this point:

Participant A

.....when it comes to lectures, they are very much approachable; you have a problem anytime or when you are stuck in Maths, you can knock on their door and they don't have consultation time, like you usually see, you have to consult between such and such a time. You see light is on in their room, you knock and ask, and they sort you out and you go your way....

....Supervisors are the most welcoming; they even tell you of ways to make a living such as odd campus jobs, which funding includes international students , my supervisor has been very good to me I ask her for anything even helped me get a laptop....

Drawing from the extract above, we note that some supervisors even give some tips about how to get temporary job opportunities in order to survive. However, while the narratives from these participants are positive, Participant B was an exception. This participant had negative student-supervisor experiences. Although she was uncomfortable talking about those challenges and experiences, she mentioned that she succeeded in getting a second supervisor with whom she got along well up to completion of her Masters studies. In a way, arguably, what happened in terms of getting an alternative supervisor was itself an indication of the kinds of support that the university provides to postgraduate students generally, and international students in particular.

....My first supervisor frustrated me to the point of dropping out. I do not know the reasons. What I know is that he did not like my topic; I changed it so many times to suit him but nothing ever worked but thanks to the second supervisor who helped me finish my work. I have never been assisted by international office for anything I tried seeking help there with regards to supervisor but they had no idea what I was talking about but was assisted by postgraduate office....(Participant B).

This is an indication that even where the majority of the people are positive and supportive, there will also be some who are not. This also shows that sometimes, you do not get assistance where you are supposed to. The culture of universities is distinctively different to other sectors because academics are generally highly individualistic in their work (White & Weathersby, 2005). For supervisors being supportive to their students has had a positive impact on the international postgraduate students.

4.2.9 What university leadership ought to do!

The analysis of data has indicated that there are a number of issues that constitute international postgraduate students' lived experiences. These included financial issues, difficulties of being in a foreign land, challenges relating to gaining access and staying in the country and many others. In this theme I turn the focus to what the participants suggested the university leadership should do to alleviate their plights. Almost all the participant expressed that university leadership had a role to play, if universities plan and carry out international postgraduate student's recruitment plans. These participants suggested that leadership in the university

should take integration of international students seriously, and show that it has clear plans about how it should happen. The office of international affairs should be tasked with the task of integrating international postgraduate student into the university community. They argued that such an office should do more than just clearing students for registration. That office should, amongst other things run orientation and support programmes. They further argued that it would be ideal if staff of this office have full understanding of the students they deal with and the dynamics that surround them. This is what Participant A said on this issue:

..... I know the university recognises international students. Sometimes, when they try to take decisions that involve international students they should involve international students rather than international office. Currently, the international office is managed by local employees from South Africa who probably, may not fully understand the international students. So I am thinking in making policy they should try and involve international students.

Closely linked to the issue of understanding the needs of international postgraduate students, is the need for leadership to understand the needs of these students and show willingness to support them in handling various issues that government departments want. In other words, they should be prepared to work in close liaison with the Department of Home Affairs for an example. One way in which the university could work together with other government departments, the university leadership could make arrangement with Department of Home Affairs to have the university send them a list of student admitted so as to fast-track the study visa process without compromising the country's securities. This participant said:

.....the university can equally help if the international office admissions can send the list of admitted students straight to Home Affairs office. Through this, they can be sure that they have access to legitimately admitted students. That makes every person's life easy, to make system move fast (Participant A).

The other area where university leadership could do more is to ensure that indigenous language module is compulsory for undergraduate students. That will help ensure that these students can access local language as this language is frequently used during lectures, and international students are left out of such conversations. Since the university has a bilingual policy, by having forcing international students to study a module on this language will help entrench the policy and ensure effective implementation of the policy. Participant C had this to say in that regard:

.....I believe as university accepting international students when they are coming I think they should have a programme where they teach them Zulu language to help them to integrate. Remember that they are not just coming to school but they are coming to

a society, so they need to understand and be able to interact. Maybe, the first 3 months can be dedicated to Zulu classes so that they learn at least the basics of Zulu so that they could be able to interact.....

There is a feeling that university leadership is not doing enough for students who come in as international postgraduate students as the programmes organised for international students are meant for and usually focus mainly on undergraduates. International postgraduate students have needs that are different from those of local postgraduate students, therefore, it would help if the university leadership have an orientation of these students:

....I think there should be an orientation just for postgraduates I believe each year when postgraduates are coming in February have a day for postgraduates orientation they tell them about the structures; the association where everything is if you need to report not just academic orientation as a postgraduate you probably know about the department but the orientation on university life is very important....(Participant C).

This view was also shared by many other participants in the study. Understanding various structures can be useful in dealing with many issues even before they can become a huge problem. Policies and strategies are a key dimension of leadership in internationalisation of higher education. The aim of university leadership is to give all our students the skills to study, Work, live and engage with others across cultural or geographical borders (DHET, 2018).

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented a detailed discussion of the data that was generated from seven international postgraduate students. Stories generated from semi-structured interviews have been presented using verbatim quotes to support the claims that I have made. In conclusion, it is clear that there are various factors that can assist in providing insights about the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying at a South African university. The next chapter will present findings drawn from the data presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four focused on data presentation from the seven participants. This chapter presents the findings of the study. As part of that presentation, I try to show the extent to which the findings address the research questions guiding the study. I begin the chapter by presenting summary of the whole study before presenting and discussing the main findings. I decided to use research questions to present the findings. Using research questions placed me in a better position to assess the extent to which the research questions that underpinned the study were sufficiently answered and linked the findings to the theoretical framework. The findings are interpreted in accordance with the larger body of literature on international postgraduate students lived experiences. This chapter then begins with a synthesis of the whole dissertation. Thereafter, research questions are re-stated and then used as headings to organise the discussion of the findings and recommendations.

5.2 Study summary

Academic mobility is viewed as an important instrument for expanding the capacity of higher education systems in developing countries. Several SADC countries committed SADC Protocol on Education and Training aimed at achieving increased flows of academics and students across the region's national boundaries (Southern African Regional Universities Association [SARUA],2011). Higher education is now recognised as very critical for the economic development of a nation (Bloom et al., 2006). This is the context and significance that this study is based upon. I undertook the study with the aim of understanding the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying at a South African University, and also examined what informed those lived experiences. Annually there is a number of African students arriving at South African universities with the aim of getting postgraduate higher education of a much better quality than that offered in their home countries (Lee &Rice, 2007). Therefore, this study sought to understand how the universities contributed to the lived experiences of international. The first chapter has addressed a number of issues relating to

international postgraduate students including their mobility and the choice of SA as their destination. The second chapter provided a detailed discussion on all these issues including various types of challenges that international postgraduate students face when they arrive and stay in this and other host countries. The third chapter delved into details about design and methodological issues. These included issues of paradigm, methodology, design, sampling, gaining access to research sites and participants, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical consideration. The fourth chapter presented a detailed discussion of the data that emerged from the analysis, and the final chapter concludes the study by presenting the findings and making recommendations drawn the findings.

5.3 Key research questions

The three research questions of the study are listed below:

- What are the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying in a South African university?
- What challenges do international postgraduate students experience whilst studying at a South African University?
- What can be learned about how University leadership responds to international postgraduate students' needs?

5.4 Presentation of findings

This chapter discusses the findings that are based on the data presented in the previous chapter. The findings indicate the extent to which the data provided by participants has successfully answered the research questions that were posed in the first chapter. The findings are discussed under these research questions, which are used as headings to organise the presentation of the discussion.

5.4.1 What are the lived experiences of international postgraduate students studying in a South African university?

The findings show that the lived experiences of international postgraduate students were characterised by a variety of issues ranging from identities to what they perceived as unfair

discrimination against foreigners. Starting with the identity issue, the findings clearly show that being a foreigner in a foreign land dominated their experience and thinking. Participants explained that once they arrived in SA, they felt alienated from their familiar environments in their home countries in a number of ways, including the language, culture, marginalisation and a host of other issues. More details on this issue can be found in **Section 4.2.2 of Chapter Four**.

The other important issue characterising the lived experiences of international postgraduate students relates to a complex and contradictory interplay between their proven prowess in sports and their exclusion from sports. The findings show that these students were accepted by their fellow local students and in fact, in some instances, they even provided guidance to the local students. However, when team selection was done, most often, international students were excluded. This was indeed contradictory to their contribution in sports during training and practice sessions where their skills were acknowledged and appreciated. More details about this issue can be found in **Section 4.2.5 of Chapter Four**.

Another important area of their experience relates to misunderstandings about language issues. The findings show that when international postgraduate students left their home countries, they were aware of language policy, in particular, English as the medium of instruction. When they arrived in SA, they did not experience any difficulty communicating in English. With the exception of some Asian and Francophone countries, the majority of students understood English and thus did not have any communication problems. Therefore, they expected to be taught in that language. However, the findings show that this expectation was not entirely met as some lecturers persisted in using indigenous language that international students did not understand. Therefore, many of these students were excluded some academic conversations through the consistent use of indigenous language. What I believe could be judged as unfair is the fact that (according to international students), there is no mention of the use of indigenous language in teaching. In addition, they were not informed that they were supposed to learn an additional language in order to benefit from academic engagements in lecture halls. A detailed discussion on this issue is provided in **Section 4.2.3 of Chapter Four**.

5.4.2 What challenges do international postgraduate students experience whilst studying at a South African University?

The findings indicate that there were many challenges that international postgraduate students faced whilst studying at this South African university. The first one is about finances. When they arrived in SA, they realised that financial support was limited to local students only. This reality clearly brings into question the evidence in the literature which suggests that fees in SA are low and that is why this country is one of the most preferred destination for international postgraduate students. More details on this issue can be found in **Section 4.2.1 of Chapter Four**. Faced with such challenges, international students look for temporary jobs in order to survive in a foreign country.

Another finding relates to challenges experienced when trying to renew visa and/or study permits. Getting into the country was less problematic than renewing permits. Although the university has an international affairs office, international postgraduate students did not find that office helpful in addressing their needs. Based on their experiences, they suggested that, perhaps, it would be better if the university would liaise with for example, the Department of Home Affairs or the Immigration office when handling the applications of international students. **Section 4.2.7 of Chapter Four** provides a detailed discussion of this point under the subheading ‘Trials and tribulations of gaining access and staying in the country’.

The last finding on this topic is about integration challenges. There are many instances where foreign nationals are made to feel unwelcome in the country. Xenophobia is evident in South African society and, although not so much at universities, however, it does affect international postgraduate students as some of these violent attacks have been in places where international postgraduate students lived. Participants expressed that they have encountered resentment from local students as they perceived them to be competitors for scarce university places, scarce university jobs and for scarce government financial resources. More details on this issue are provided in **Section 4.2.2 of Chapter Four**. Facing challenges in host countries been the case for decades, various challenges to varying degrees but this has not been seen to discourage African students to study abroad. A study of nursing students from Nigeria studying in the United States of America (USA), found they experienced social isolation and language barriers, but maintained their resolve and persisted despite the challenges (Lee, 2010).

5.4.3 What can be learned about how University leadership responds to international postgraduate students' needs?

A number of lessons can be learned about how leadership can or should do to respond to the needs of international postgraduate students. From these students' perspectives, the international office played no significant role in supporting their needs. For instance, there were delays in processing international students' permits in the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Such delays in issuing relevant documents has prevented international students from attaining visas and living comfortably. The international students' office could play a role in ensuring smooth processing of these students' documentation. Besides this issue collaboration between these offices, international students' affairs, the findings indicate that office had a very limited understanding about different categories of international students, and students that were also refugees clearly fell outside of their realm. In other words, issues that students who also have refugees' status faced were not known by the international office and, in fact, they seemed not to know that they existed in the first place. What I also found to be troublesome is the fact that the university is aggressively recruiting international students but again, it does not provide requisite support or show some understanding of their plights.

There is an important question about what leadership ought to do. In Section 4.2.9 of Chapter Four, students express what they expect from university leadership. The university international office was seen by most participant as adding no value to them as it was seen as a policing office to check if they are all fully compliant. Most of the participants reported only ever engaging with this office at registration time only. International students with refugee and permanent resident status felt that the international office did not have an understanding of the different categories of international students because of this they constantly have remind them what applies and what does not apply to them. There is a suggestion of international students working at the international office as they understand better from experience needs of international students.

On the issue of study permits, participant even suggested that universities should send a list of international students they have enrolled to the Department of Home Affairs with the hope that it will fast-track the process. Discussions and collaborations between university leaders and

Department of Home Affairs leaders would be the practice of systems thinking, interconnectedness of different organisations.

University leadership introduced compulsory isiZulu modules for all undergraduate students as its moving towards a bilingual university. A bilingual university has international postgraduate students who have not been exposed to isiZulu and are being ostracised for their lack of understanding of the Zulu language. Participants expect for university leadership to introduce classes or Workshops for them to learn the language as this will improve their lives at university.

5.5 Recommendations

One of the recommendations is directed at university management although they did not take part in this study. The findings from the narratives of international postgraduate students clearly show that there are a number of areas that the university needs to attend to. One of them is the international office whose tasks and responsibilities needs to be reviewed in order to focus more on providing various support to these students. Kishun (2007, p. 464) suggests that “higher education sector needs to make the international office an integral part of governance structures if internationalisation is to be handled in ways that benefit the sector.” It is therefore recommended that the university restructures the international office to being functional in assisting international students with their paperwork, accommodation and to host workshops to orientate with the aim to acculturate international students to this foreign space (Kishun, 2007). University leaders should cultivate a environment that is open and welcoming for all and a global citizen mindset. It’s important for university leadership to be aware of local, regional and international developments so that they adjust accordingly. Equally important is to train all students local and international to become world citizens accepting and tolerant of each other.

The other recommendation is directed at the international students. They need to be vigilant about advertisements posted by universities so that they are not caught off guard as it happens in the area of accommodation problems, and also they need to be sure to get clarity on their understanding of what is being advertised. This was the case in relation to accommodation and

in relation to registering for full time studies when the student intended to study part time. Universities cannot operate in silos and have several partners and stakeholders to collaborate with.

5.6 Implications of the study

There are a number of implications of this study, and these relate to research, practice and policy areas. One of them relates to the need for better understanding of the needs of international postgraduate students, and one way of doing this is through research. Furthermore, this study underscores the need for consistency in terms of the university management aligning their policies and practices, particularly, in relation to working collaboratively with other departments of state such as the DHA. Moving forward, it is essential that immigration laws and practices are urgently reformed to ensure the human rights of international students. Restricting access to citizenship and access to other privileges and job opportunities pose as exclusionary measures by the government (Landau, 2011). Collaboration to support academic mobility should be governed by the principle of equal partnership for mutual benefit.

5.7 Suggestions for further research

This study focused on lived experiences of international postgraduate students from within African states. It would be interesting to explore experiences of university management in hosting international postgraduate students. This research study is based on the lived experiences of African international postgraduate students at a south African university. It would be interesting to know if the findings would be different for students from outside the African continent.

5.8 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented the findings drawn from the data presented in Chapter Four. The chapter has pointed to several areas where more action is needed. Through this chapter, I have clearly shown that recommendations are drawn from the perspectives of international postgraduate students only and the views of management were not solicited due to the design of the study which focuses on the lived experiences of postgraduate students.

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21 February 2019

The Registrar
University of KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa

Dear Registrar,

LETTER OF CONSENT AND INFORMATION

Thank you for the opportunity to explain my research study for your consideration. I am Zanele Khanyile enrolled for a Master's degree in Educational Leadership Management and Policy at School of Education Edgewood campus. I will be supervised by Professor TT Bhengu. The Title of my research study is: **Exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students from the African continent studying at a South African University.**

The aim of the study is to bring the integration experiences of international postgraduate students to the fore with the hope of advancing the sensitivity of SA universities to their cause and be appreciative of their contribution towards the higher education landscape of South African Universities.

I would like to be granted permission to conduct this study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, faculty of Humanities, school of Education, Edgewood campus.

The research study requires participation of eight (08) postgraduate international students to be interviewed by the researcher. The interview will be semi structured, recorded, conducted at a time convenient for the student, is estimated to take an hour (1hr) and will be conducted at the University premises.

What will it involve?

- Permission to conduct the study will be obtained for UKZN Registrar.
- Ethical clearance will be obtained from UKZN ethics committee.
- The researcher will contact the international office to make arrangements to have access to the participants.
- Participants will be given information and asked to sign a letter of consent, indicating that they are willing to participate in the study and that the researcher has given them information about the study and procedure involved.
- The study will be conducted through a self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussions that will be recorded.

Please note the following:

- Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time with no penalties.
- No pay in form of incentives will be given to any of the participants.
- There are no costs to the participants.
- All the participants will be issued pseudo names and no personal information shall be recorded.

The findings of this study once concluded will be made available to the University and the participants, no personal information will be mentioned. The researcher hopes that the study will have findings that contribute towards a smooth integration experience for international postgraduate students and also make valuable contribution to literature on the South African Context of the educational migration phenomena.

Your consideration and permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards.

Zanele Khanyile

Researcher



22 February 2019

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Zanele Khanyile enrolled for a Master's degree in Educational Leadership Management and Policy at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and I can be contacted on +27713650602 Or zanelekhanyile@gmail.com.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that is titled: **Exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students from the African continent studying at a South African University**. The aim of the study is to bring the integration experiences of international postgraduate students to the fore with the hope of advancing the sensitivity of SA universities to their cause and be appreciative of their contribution towards the higher education landscape of South African Universities. The study is expected to enroll 8 participants from the UKZN school of Education Edgewood campus. It will involve the semi structured interviews s. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be between 50-60 minutes for the interviews.

There is no known risk that the study may pose. We hope that the study will contribute towards a smooth integration experience for international postgraduate students and make valuable contribution to literature on the South African Context of the educational migration phenomena.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you

may contact the researcher or Supervisor or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

UKZN Ethics: Marriette Snyman, +27312608350, snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor: Professor TT Bhengu, +27312603534, bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

Researcher: Zanele Khanyile, +27 713650602, zanelekhanyile@gmail.com

Please take note:

- Participation in this research study is voluntary and you may withdraw at anytime
- Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not incur a penalty or loss of any benefits that you are normally entitled to.
- This study is for academic purposes only, participation in this study will not incur costs, and there are no incentives or reimbursement for participation in this study.
- Names of participants will not be disclosed during the study the names will also not be used in the study findings will use Pseudo names.
- All data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled **Exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students from the African continent studying at a South African University** by researcher Zanele Khanyile.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

UKZN Ethics: Marriette Snyman, +27312608350, snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor: Professor TT Bhengu, +27312603534, bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

Researcher: Zanele Khanyile, +27 713650602, zanelekhanyile@gmail.com

I hereby provide additional consent to:

Please tick applicable box

	YES	NO
Audio Record the interview		

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

Signature of Translator

Date

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Venue ----- Time -----

Interviewee Code -----

TITLE: Exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students from the African continent studying at a South African University.

INTRODUCTION

The reason for conducting the interviews is to generate data. The researcher before the start of the interview will again explain the topic to the participant, will also remind each participant that the information gathered during the interview will be for purpose of the research only. Researcher will assure the participant that the information gathered will remain confidential at all times. The participants will be made aware that the interview will take between 40-60 minutes and how it is being structured, there can be breaks in between. Also to let the participant know that the researcher will be taking notes and using an audio recorder to record the interview, let the participant know why that is being done. Before commencement of the interview, the research will check and make sure that the participant is comfortable and ready to start with the interview.

BACKGROUND

It will be beneficial to divide the interview into three parts to create order and consistency, and this will be guided by the critical questions of the study.

Participant will be asked the following questions to guide the interview discussion

QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPERINCES

1. Please tell me about your experiences in the application, acceptance and orientation process at a South African University?

2. What is it like to study at this campus? Remember you can draw from any experiences: lecture rooms, residences, research commons, interaction with supervisor, sport fields etc.?

3. How are these experiences contributing positively or negatively towards your studies at the university? are there any challenges that you would like to mention ?

QUESTIONS ABOUT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

4. Are you aware of any university Policy or strategy with regards to international students?

5. If aware of any policies, do you think they are applied correctly, upheld by the university?

6. Given a chance what would you suggest to university management, with regards to policy and strategies for improving the lives of international postgraduate students?

CONCLUSION

Before closing the interview the participant must be thanked for taking part as part of the research. Check if you have the correct information of the participant in case you want to contact the participant again. Let the participant know when the feedback will be available.



25 February 2019

Ms Zanele Khanyile (SN 955058748)
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN
Email: zanelekhangyile@gmail.com

Dear Ms Khanyile

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Exploring the lived experiences of international postgraduate students from the African continent studying at a South African University."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with postgraduate international students in the School of Education on the Edgewood Campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


MR S S MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 0000/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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APPENDIX E

Masters Research Submission

Begoña Errasti-Ibarrondo, José Antonio Jordán,
Mercedes P. Díez-Del-Corral, María
Arantzamendi. "van Manen's phenomenology of
practice: How can it contribute to nursing?",
Nursing Inquiry, 2018

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